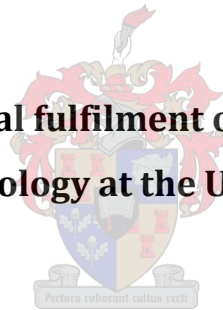


The Presence of the Kingdom in the Light of the Speech Act Theory (SAT): An Ethical Inquiry

By

Anna Cho

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Department of Systematic Theology

Promoter: Dr. Dion Forster

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, Anna Cho, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and it has not been submitted previously in its entirety or in part at any university or college for a degree.

Signature: Anna Cho

Date: 01 November 2015

ABSTRACT

This thesis relates Christian ethics to the presence of the kingdom of God in Jesus' sayings and to its real meaning and application by reconsidering the religious language of the kingdom of God from the perspective of the Speech Act Theory (SAT). In SAT, the Christian ethical approach to the presence of the kingdom in Jesus' sayings is not only aimed at reconstructing meanings of the ethics of the kingdom in the form of a propositional morality theme. It also aims at reconstructing the Christian life as the performance of the ethics of the kingdom in daily life, that is, in terms of the presence of God's kingdom in Jesus' utterances and its witness. Christians do not merely assert certain facts about God's sovereignty or God's kingdom; they address God in the act of committing themselves to God's kingdom and applying their minds to its righteousness.

Since Christian ethics depends on the message of the kingdom proclaimed by Jesus, the essence of interpretation in Christian ethics is therefore to recognize the illocutionary act in the Bible. In SAT, only illocution is able to determine meaning and to act. It also creates the perlocutionary act as an appropriate response in the believer such as trust or obedience. The living Triune God is still speaking to us through Scripture – not in past stories but in the present in order to fulfil God's will and God's kingdom. This indicates that Jesus' preaching about the kingdom of God focuses on what we should do or how we should live as Christians. The Bible is not supposed to be interpreted only in an academic context but should also be performed by the people of God. Consequently, the Christian community should try to discover the momentum and function of the text in order to build up the people of God to live in the world and to participate in the activities of the kingdom of God, not as spectators but as active participants in the present world. It also tells us who God is, and how we ought to live in relation to that God. Christian communities are called to institute policies that alter the settings in which the interpretation of Scripture takes place. In this way, Christian ethics can map out a new moral sensibility and specific directions through the presence of the kingdom of God in the light of SAT.

OPSOMMING

Hierdie tesis vergelyk Christelike etiek met die teenwoordigheid van die koninkryk van God in Jesus se uitsprake en die ware betekenis en toepassing daarvan deur die heroorweging van die godsdienstige taal van die koninkryk van God vanuit die perspektief van Spraak Daad Teorie (“Speech Act Theory (SAT)”). Volgens SAT is die Christelike etiese benadering tot die teenwoordigheid van die koninkryk in Jesus se uitsprake nie net daarop gemik om die betekenis van koninkryk-etiek te rekonstrueer in die vorm van ’n proposisionele moraliteit-tema nie. Die doel is ook die rekonstruksie van die Christelike lewe as die uitvoering van koninkryk-etiek in die alledaagse lewe, dit wil sê in terme van die teenwoordigheid van die koninkryk van God in Jesus se uitsprake en getuienis. Christene stel nie bloot bepaalde feite oor God se heerskappy of God se koninkryk nie; hulle spreek God aan in die daad van hulself toewy aan die koninkryk van God en hul gedagtes rig op die regverdigheid van dié koninkryk.

Aangesien Christelike etiek berus op die koninkryk-boodskap wat Jesus verkondig het, is die essensie van interpretasie in Christelike etiek dus die erkenning van die illokusionele daad in die Bybel. Met SAT kan illokusie bepaal en ook optree beteken. Dit skep ook die perlokusionele daad as ’n toepaslike reaksie deur gelowiges, soos vertrouwe of gehoorsaamheid. Die lewende Drie-enige God spreek steeds deur die Skrif – nie deur stories in die verlede nie, maar in die hede, om God se wil te vervul en God se koninkryk te laat kom. Dit dui aan dat Jesus se prediking oor die koninkryk van God fokus op wat ons behoort te doen of hoe ons as Christene behoort te leef. Die Bybel is nie veronderstel om net in ’n akademiese konteks geïnterpreteer te word nie, maar moet ook deur God se mense uitgevoer word. Gevolglik behoort die Christelike gemeenskap te probeer om die momentum en funksie van die teks te ontdek, met die oog daarop om God se mense op te bou om in die wêreld te leef en aan die aktiwiteite van die koninkryk van God deel te neem – nie as toeskouers nie, maar as aktiewe deelnemers in die wêreld vandag. Dit vertel ons ook wie God is, en hoe ons behoort te leef in verhouding tot dié God. Christelike gemeenskappe word geroep om beleide in te stel wat die stellings verander waarbinne Skrifinterpretasie plaasvind. Op hierdie wyse kan Christelike etiek ’n nuwe morele aanvoeling en spesifieke aanwysings deur die teenwoordigheid van die koninkryk van God in die lig van SAT karteer.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Motivation of the Thesis

How should we as Christians live faithfully in our everyday life and what is our duty before God? An answer to this question has to do with knowing who we are. Christians need to develop the moral and theological judgment which enables faithful discernment of Scripture's claims in contemporary life. This should take place first within the individual and then within the Christian community. Moral and theological judgment is not just saying something, it also requires doing something and making decisions that are in agreement with our moral convictions and belief in God. This is closely linked to "what we want to be" and "what we want to do" rather than what we ought to do (Williams 2001:4). The question of what we believe or how to live in the present precedes what we as Christians ought to do before God and people or how we ought to act based on our faith. In other words, spiritual need, that is, having strong faith in God, precedes life's needs and it is also required for Christian morality. According to Hauerwas (1983:22), the question "what ought I to be?" entails the question "what ought I to do?" This question of what I ought to do is actually about what I am or ought to be. For example, "Should I or should I not have an abortion?" is not just a question about an "act" but about what kind of person I am going to be, what kind of person I was or what kind of life I had (Hauerwas 1983:117). Therefore, these questions are signals that help remind us of the kind of people we are and of the things we can hope for.

How then do we know this? We can gain understanding by having true faith in Jesus Christ. What then is true faith? We can find the key to this in the eschatological faith found in Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom of God which is the true gospel and good news to all the people in the world especially the poor, the captives and the oppressed who are set free by the truth of the gospel. The proclaimed gospel was a hope and indicator of life; the good news proclaimed by Christ was about the coming of the kingdom. He said, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news" (Mk 1:14-15). He added that, "The kingdom of God is among you" (Lk 17:21).

Eschatology is not just the doctrine of the last things or the doctrine of the end or just a part of Christian doctrine (Moltmann 1967:15-16). Eschatology also entails the doctrine of Christian hope and its beginning. According to Yoder (1971:53), to live eschatologically is to live in the light of a hope which, defying present frustration, defines a present position in terms of the yet unseen goal which gives it meaning. The longing for God grows among the people as God creates a history of promise towards a complete future which encompasses the whole promise until God is all in all (Harvie 2009:18). Thus, Christian faith lives from the resurrection of the crucified Jesus Christ and longs after the promise of the universal future of Christ (Moltmann 1967:15-16). In other words, having a hope of the future in Christ implies living the everyday life with the true Christian identity and in faith in the language of the promise between God and all creation (Moltmann 1967:41; 37-42).

The promise relates to the implications of Christian hope for moral human action. It implies that something is not yet fulfilled but there is a possibility that it would happen and would create a new reality as a divine force by God. Therefore, eschatology reflects on the Christian hope for the completion of human life in perfect fellowship with God and others and for the consummation of God's purpose for all creation (Migliore 2004:330).

Christian eschatology especially underlines the divine promise which God fulfils through his own sovereign choice (Thiselton 2007:545). Pannenberg (1998:173) points out that hope, like faith, rests on trust in the promises of God, together with "a sense of the incompleteness of life as it now is... related to the confidence that it is oriented to its possible fulfilment." Faith as trust "in God and in his promise is never apart from hope" (Pannenberg 1998:173). For Christians, Paul declares, "Hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit" (Rom 5:5).

The kind of eschatological hope embedded in the divine promise can be found in Jesus' preaching about the kingdom of God. Pannenberg (1969:102-126) explains that the meaning of eschatology in theology suggests that eschatology has an intimate connection with ethics; the eschatological dimensions of the teachings of Jesus can offer a foundation for ethics. Hauerwas and Yoder maintain that any description of ethical Christian living builds on Jesus' teaching and his kingdom. Both authors believe that the kingdom of God is concretely expressed and embodied in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. It is from this understanding that a radical

ecclesiology, seen as the embodiment of God's reign, becomes a necessary response rooted in the eschatological hope of God (Gingerich 2008:129). These considerations indicate that the recovery of the eschatological vision is crucial for the church's understanding of its relationship to the world as witness under the work of the Holy Spirit (Hauerwas 2013: xi, 37-38).

Many of the teachings of Jesus in the gospels are associated with human behavior. These include the Beatitudes (Mk 5:3-12), the blessings and woes (Lk 6:20-26), the Golden Rule (Mk 7:12), the parable of the narrow and wide gates (Mk 7:13-14; Lk 13:24), the parable of the unmerciful servant (Mk 18:21-35), and the parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:25-37), among others. However, these teachings are informed by very strict ethical standards. Thus, Schweitzer (cf. 1925:94-115; 1968:81-88) argues that Jesus' ethical teachings are designed as "interim ethics" or "emergency ethics" practicable for a very short period before the coming of the kingdom of God on the earth. Unlike Schweitzer, Ladd (1964:274-300) claims that Jesus' ethics is the ethics of the kingdom and the ethics of God's reign. Ladd (1974:91) describes God's sovereignty as redemptive rule and work, now present in the person, deeds, and words of Jesus; the kingdom and its blessings are present and vigorously active among people:

Our central thesis is that the kingdom of God is the redemptive reign of God dynamically active to establish his rule among men, and that this kingdom, which will appear as an apocalyptic act at the end of the age, has already come into human history in the person and mission of Jesus to overcome evil, to deliver men from its power, and to bring them into the blessing of God's reign.

Similarly, Küng (1971:79-96) also describes “the reign of God” as a “present-futurist eschatology of hope” in which the church lives and which affects the present, that is, it takes on power in the present and is fulfilled in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ being seen as the decisive eschatological action of God.

God’s sovereignty does not operate in a vacuum but it takes place only within the human response of living in the present so that human action is connected to God’s kingdom which is not a place away from here, but where we live right now – the present.¹ Thus, Christian ethics leads us to consider contemporary character ethics in God’s rule and its application of Jesus’ fundamental teaching of Christian discipleship (Stassen & Gushee 2003:11-16). From these points, we can tease out the implications for Christian ethics today.

Jesus’ parables and preaching in the New Testament constitute one of the most important subject matters relating to the kingdom of God² and its moral reflection. Curiously enough, however, scholars disagree on what Jesus meant by the kingdom of God in his teachings. Some have interpreted the kingdom in terms of first-century Judaism while others have internalised or de-

¹ Wright (1996:202; 2007:25) points out that in the gospel of Matthew, the “kingdom of God” in Jesus’ sayings are in the other gospels rendered as the “kingdom of heaven”. Since many people read Matthew first, they understand what Jesus meant when He talked about “entering the kingdom of heaven.” However, the word heaven in the New Testament means the establishment of God’s sovereign rule on earth and in this world as it is in heaven. God’s kingdom is not a place where we go after death, but a place where we live right now.

² The kingdom of God is at the heart of Jesus’ teaching, appearing 103 times in the Synoptic Gospels. For more information on this issue, see Caragounis (1992:417-430).

temporalized the concept of the kingdom of God and seen it variously from cosmological, spiritual, allegorical, mystical, psychological, philosophical, and sociological perspectives (Buchanan 1970:55). Some other scholars have understood the Kingdom as both a future hope and a present reality (Taylor 1937:9; Cullmann 1951:81-83; Moltmann 1967:16-19; 1993:98; 1996:22-26; Pannenberg 1969:68; Hiers 1970:3; Fee 1991:11; Wright 2007:5). This “both-present-and-future” view has become a predictable feature in contemporary systematic theology and a part of Christian catechism currently in use in both Protestant and Roman Catholic Churches.³ At the 1988 General Conference in St. Louis, the “both-present-and-future” view became the official position of the United Methodist Church. The *Book of Discipline* of the United Methodist Church contains a section entitled “Doctrinal Standards and Our Theological Task.” Proposed for this section at the 1988 General Conference was the following declaration:

With other Christians we recognized that the kingdom of God is both a present and future reality. The church is called to be that place where the first signs of the *kingdom* are identified and acknowledge in the world.

However, during the deliberations of the General Conference in St. Louis, the statement was modified to read:

With other Christians we recognized that the kingdom of God is both a present and future reality. The church is called to be that place where the first signs of the *reign* of God are identified and acknowledge in the world.

³ *The Common Catechism* (New York: Seabury Press, 1975), 124: “A tension between present and future is one of the main features of Jesus’ preaching about the kingdom of God. Sometimes he describes it as something of the present, sometimes as something in the future.”

The decision to change the word “kingdom” to “reign” is significant (cf. Sullivan 1988:10-11), and the question must be asked: How do we can explain the historical life and teaching of Jesus in the tension between the present and future in the kingdom?

According to Hauerwas (1985:116), Jesus was not simply a good teacher of ethical ideals; rather, He is seen as the very presence of the kingdom of God. In fact, Jesus’ words suggest that the kind of kingdom Jesus was concerned about was not a literal kingdom with thrones and clearly defined territory but a spiritual kingdom.⁴ Even though the kingdom of God in the sayings of Jesus does not point directly to objective things,⁵ the words of Jesus should be the pattern for Christian action and his identity should govern the content of the ethics of God’s kingdom. Chilton (1987:19-20) emphasizes the “performance of the kingdom” noting that Jesus manifested the reign of God in his time in the form of miracles and parables, in actions and in words. Chilton (1987:24, 31) further points out the relationship between the Jesus’ parables and human action in the kingdom of God:

To read the parables is itself an acknowledgment that human action might be implicated in God’s kingdom; to believe them is actually to undertake appropriate action, the parabolic action of the kingdom, in the present. Because the kingdom is of a God whose claims are

⁴ With Gustaf Dalman’s (cf. 1909:94) classic *Die Worte Jesu*, the attention of scholars was drawn to the fact that “*basileia*” in the similar phrases “kingdom of God” and “kingdom of Heaven” was a rendering of the Aramaic word “*malkuth* (מַלְכוּת).” This Aramaic word usually means “kingdom” in the sense of a territory ruled by a king. But as Dalman points out, it can also have an abstract force signifying “reign” or “kingship.” Dodd accepts Dalman’s perspective in his work, “*The Parables of the Kingdom*” (1935:34-44).

⁵ Jesus proclaimed the kingdom of God using parables and not plain words to teach His disciples and the people. For more information on the meaning and interpretation of parables, see RH Stein, *An Introduction to the Parables of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1981), chapter 1-6.

absolute, it necessarily addresses itself to people as a cognitive and an ethical challenge at one and the same time.

Jesus spoke about kingdom of God in parables to His disciples and the people explaining that the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom had been given to disciples but not to the ordinary people.⁶ In this respect, the parables have a double function – the first is that they reveal the secrets of the kingdom of God to God’s people, and the second is to hide the secret from the outsiders. The Jesus’ parables were meant only for His disciples and not for those on the outside, which means that the words of Jesus constitute institutional facts having divine force only within the Christian community in order to establish patterns of behaviour in the present life. For example, the blessed life that Jesus announced in the Beatitudes is not a private, interior possession of individuals but a communal form of life that is displayed socially and politically (Hauerwas 2011:262). Moral sensibilities are about what is right and wrong or what we should do and about an overlapping awareness of what kinds of human institutions and practices are necessary to sustain the common life. Furthermore, these considerations can go beyond the mere identification of already existing patterns of behaviour and create new identity and norms as well as discover ways of improving the present human condition. This leads us to the meaning of a righteous kingdom and its life of righteousness as Christians in the world and point to what is to be, what can be, and what ought to be. How do we then discover the true moral kingdom from Jesus’ message in a more practical manner and in terms of the ethical issue? How is its moral purpose developed as a defining ethical decision?

⁶ See Matthew 13:10-17, Mark 4:10-12 and Luke 8:9-10.

A social ethical approach to this performative dimension of the kingdom of God as a mortified action is not only aimed at reconstructing meanings of the coming kingdom in the form of a propositional morality theme, but rather to reconstruct the Christian life in the public domain ethically, i.e., in terms of the presence of God's kingdom and its witness. The ethics of the kingdom of God is discipleship-ethics, and the ethics of discipleship is the anticipation-ethics of the future with an action sustained by hope – a free action, and not one under compulsion (Moltmann 2012:3, 38). Christians do not merely assert certain facts about God's sovereignty; they address God in the act of committing themselves to God's kingdom and applying their minds to its righteousness.

In order to respond to this moral vision and its practical foundation, the ethical reflection on the kingdom of God would not only grasp the text's central theme or shape a re-narration of the story of the kingdom of God in Jesus' teaching. Additionally, encountering God's kingdom is a continual process of performing God's righteousness under the guidance of God's sovereignty. Righteousness is what God gives us in order to achieve God's kingdom on earth; it is what we do, which means God brings righteousness as our deliverance, and we participate in it by doing righteousness (Guelich 1982:85-87). These considerations indicate that the Christian moral knowledge and its testimony are really doing something; that is to say, those sovereign intentional actions in God's kingdom do warn, promise, or exhort. From this possibility, ethical principles of God's kingdom can be applied to each new areas of morality within the ordinary life.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

This study emerges in response to an understanding of the presence of the kingdom of God and its relevance to contemporary Christian ethics by reconsidering the religious language of the kingdom of God from the perspective of Speech Act Theory.

Therefore, the question that this research will engage is: What Christian ethical applications emerge from a Speech Act Theory approach to the theology of the presence of the kingdom of God?

1.3 More Insight into the Problem

Even though several studies have focused on the meaning of the biblical concept of the kingdom of God, the teaching and practices of Jesus are routinely ignored or misinterpreted in the preaching and teaching ministry of the Churches and in Christian scholarship on ethics (Stassen & Gushee 2003:11). The living Triune God is still speaking to us through the Scripture not in past stories but in the present in order to fulfil God's will and God's kingdom. This means that the key point in Jesus' preaching about the kingdom of God focuses on what we should do as Christians.

The Bible is not supposed to be interpreted only in an academic context, but it is to be performed by the people of God (Fowl & Jones 1991:29). Christian communities are called to institute policies that alter the settings in which interpretation of Scripture takes place. Scripture not only shapes the political contexts of faithful interpretation, it also tells us who God is, and how we ought to live in relation to that God. Thus, the aim of scriptural interpretation is to live our everyday life in the situations in which we find ourselves according to the characters, convictions, and practices related in the Scripture (Fowl & Jones 1991:19-21). This response can offer new interpretations of the presence of the kingdom in everyday life through the Speech Act Theory (SAT).

The possibility of a meaningful action in and by the text is said to be performative (Ricoeur 1971:529-566). The SAT concerns itself with this aspect of language use (Briggs 2001:4). It proposes that texts/speakers are not merely uttering sounds, words or statements, but are able to perform actions, which means they do not just say something; they do something. In this regard, the task of linguistic epistemology in the SAT is not to be viewed simply as sampling or finding the morality statement about the kingdom of God in the Scripture or as a contemporary re-description of a biblical propositional statement. Rather, the crucial matter in an alternative linguistic description and its creative epistemology in the SAT should be the rethinking of the different ethical dimensions of the kingdom of God and its righteousness. Thus, the question must be asked: How does Christian ethical theory explain the tension between cognitive-propositional models of religious language and performative-ontology models of religious language through the inherent linguistic force of the presence of kingdom of God? From an ethics perspective, this proposal will strive to distinguish between the basic Christian ethical theory and its application which places emphasis

on Christian ethical actions whose meaning must then be made available by the applied meanings found in Christian ethical theory that can be used to establish God's kingdom in the world. This dissimilarity will emphasise the need for new linguistic sensitivity and praxis in relation to public domain.

1.4 Aim of Research

The aim of this research is to rediscover the ethical dimensions of the presence of kingdom of God by approaching it from the perspective of the Speech Act Theory. This research will allow us to make a more satisfactory connection between the linguistic characteristics of the concept of God's kingdom and contemporary moral vision in the light of the SAT by reconsidering the kingdom as a divine activity that is activated and regenerated in the present life. This alternative linguistic epistemology based on the SAT will consider the essence of the kingdom of God in the past (locution level), the present (illocutionary level) and the future (perlocutionary level). The dynamic equivalences of the past, present and future of the kingdom of God based on the SAT could inform Christian ethical theory and its identity in a broken world. In this regard, normative ethical theory about the kingdom of God according to the SAT does not just have implications for what we ought to do. It also has implications for Christian identity because of which we do what we ought to do.

Therefore, this research endeavours to investigate the inevitable issue of ethics' application in two senses. Firstly, it will pay attention to how the descriptive character of the presence of kingdom of God in the SAT helps us

to appreciate fully the meaning and logic of moral terms in Christian ethical theory and identity. Secondly, it will examine how the knowledge of the righteous kingdom helps us to embed practical reasons as characteristics of the new performance of morality in the public domain. In this way, the role of SAT in explaining the presence of the kingdom of God could offer new links between God's sovereignty and the responsibility of God's people in a broken world. Therefore, the application of SAT in the ethics of the kingdom suggests the idea of an alternative central Christian morality through which rules of behaviour could be performed.

1.5 Hypothesis

The kingdom of God has a recognized pattern – the so-called Augustinian pattern of creation, falling into sin, salvation and, ultimately, consummation (Boeve 2004:307). It is assumed that God came to us in the past, is living with us in the present, and leads us towards the consummation and realisation of the kingdom of God in the fullness of time. From this confession, the kingdom of God is viewed as a continuum of the living God's sovereignty through which we encounter a certain moral vision in Christianity and its practical foundation. This view can be strengthened based on the assumption that the SAT could be used to reinterpret the idea of the sovereignty of God's kingdom in terms of its religious meaning and linguistic characteristics. The linguistic identification of the kingdom of God using the SAT will be revisited from a social and ethical dimension. This linguistic model of religion will be taken as the subject matter of Christian ethical theory and its praxis in the public domain.

1.6 Methodology

In order to rediscover the meaning of the righteous kingdom and its contemporary ethical applications, this research will employ the SAT theory which claims that the use of language is explained by certain constitutive rules which govern human behaviour (Searle 1971:40). The propositional content can be understood as having certain “constitutive rules,” which constitute and regulate activities, and often have the form, “X counts as Y in context C” (Searle 1969:35). For example, under the constitutive rules of soccer, when the soccer player kicks a soccer ball into the goal, it counts as one goal. There are conventions involved in these constitutive rules, which relate to all kinds of non-linguistic criteria. Therefore, to perform illocutionary acts is to engage in “a rule-governed form of behaviour” (Searle 1979:17). In this case, Searle (1969:51) proposes the notion of “institutional facts,” which “are indeed facts; but their existence, unlike the existence of ‘brute facts,’ presupposes the existence of certain human institutions” (e.g. marriage or the rules of baseball). Furthermore, Searle (2001:58) differentiates between “brute facts” and “institutional facts” in the context of social reality. The particular sense of “institution” implied here is a “system of constitutive rules.” Thus, “the fact that a man performed a certain speech act, e.g., made a promise, is an institutional fact” (Searle 1969:52).

In fact, the ethical conception of the kingdom of God is itself “a rule-governed form of behaviour,” for it contains certain “constitutive rules” such as the value system of righteousness in Christianity’s social context. The cultural conventions involved in these constitutive rules are related to all kinds of “institutional facts.” The non-linguistic elements help us to

recognize where illocutionary action operates and to see that the illocutionary action creates “new realities.”

Similarly, Lindbeck (1984:18) explicitly appeals to a “cultural-linguistic model of religion” as an alternative to cognitive-propositional models of religious language and experiential-expressive models, which he characterizes as typically conservative and liberal, respectively. One could say that whereas Lindbeck posits a third axis as a way of making sense of the other two (propositional content and force), SAT, shows ways in which these first two are integrally linked. In fact, Lindbeck’s (1984:65) “cultural-linguistic model of religion” also stresses that the central function of language is the “performatory use of Language.” His linguistic view is based on Austin’s initial notion of SAT as a performative aspect of language which is seen as “the propositional truth of ontological correspondence only insofar as it is a performance, an act or deed, which helps create that correspondence” (Lindbeck 1984:65). Thus, there is continuity between the belief in religious language about the kingdom of God and its ethical significance to social reality. In this hermeneutical interface between ethical theory and the kingdom of God in the SAT, the reinterpretation of the religious and linguistic characteristics of the kingdom of God will reform/renew our view of social and political reality.

1.7 Provisional Structure of Thesis

This thesis comprises of five chapters. Chapter 1 serves as the introduction of the thesis while Chapter 2 is a brief survey of studies on the kingdom of God

in the context of cognitive propositional language and its moral knowledge. Furthermore, the second chapter acknowledges the theological disregard for the relationship between biblical language and its religious belief with respect to the ethical appropriation of the concept of God's kingdom. The brief survey also stresses the distinction between applied meaning based on timeless truth and on inherent linguistic force in the performative character of biblical language. Therefore, the research emphasises the need for a new alternative linguistic epistemology to describe the concept of the kingdom of God and its ethical appropriation in contemporary performance of morality.

Chapter 3 suggests an alternative linguistic epistemology in the light of SAT as an alternative strategy for moral performance in the context of the kingdom of God. The purpose of the chapter is to survey briefly the methods and terminologies employed in the SAT, particularly in the works of Austin and his student, Searle. Furthermore, the chapter examines the interface between SAT and Christian ethical theory approaches to the meaningful action in Christian morality and its identity of the rules of behaviour in the public domain. In this case, the chapter maps out new directions for determining the ultimate Christian identity that would inform the performance of morality in a broken world.

Chapter 4 focuses on the idea of moral direction and its execution in the light of the SAT. The chapter also examines the role of the threefold character of the locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts in terms of the essence of the totality of the kingdom of God in the past (locution level), the present (illocutionary level) and the future (perlocutionary level) as well as their

theological and ethical implications for the performance of morality as a righteous witness of the kingdom of God in the modern world. This hermeneutic and ethical consideration offers both constraints and guidance for Christian ethical theory. The hybrid approach stands not as an analogy but as a paradigm for Christian ethical performance in the modern world. Chapter 5 contains the summary and conclusion of the study.

CHAPTER 2

A BRIEF SURVEY OF STUDIES ON THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN THE CONTEXT OF COGNITIVE PROPOSITIONAL LANGUAGE AND ITS MORAL DIMENSION

2.1 Chapter Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to survey briefly the views and meanings of the kingdom of God in the cognitive-propositional language⁷ of the words of Jesus in order to discover its moral dimension. Existence is expressed in most cases through language; that is why language itself has the power to bring into being something that was not there before the words were spoken (Fuchs 1964:209-222). Jesus' preaching has to do with such "language events" and can help to interpret the present (Fuchs 1964:212). A language event is conceived from the hearer's perspective and a performative utterance is a statement by a person which is also existentially grounded (Thiselton 1980:336-337). This concept is similar to the idea of "performative utterances,"⁸ which focus on the force of language to accomplish its meanings and to enact an event. Thus, the sayings of Jesus have the inherent linguistic power to bring to expression the reality to which they point and they can help to shape one's attitude. In fact, language events create both new worlds and the possibility of a changed existence.

⁷ Generally, propositions describe states of affairs, which may be true or false. However, Austin (1975:11) argues that it is logically odd to use "true" or "false" to measure performative speech acts. He also points out "There is no great distinction between statements and performative utterances" (Austin 1975:52).

⁸ See JL Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975).

This chapter outlines the performative aspects of biblical language as well as how these functions create a more satisfactory bridge between text and praxis. In particular, the chapter considers the central questions in biblical interpretation that relate to the notion of God's kingdom in Christian ethics: what does the text wish to say and what does the text wish to do with what it says? How does a message of the kingdom function to build up the people of God in and for the world? These questions can be applied to debates about what constitutes the relationship between the intention of biblical language and the performative faith. The performative use of biblical language expresses a particular divine purpose such as promise, warning, and exhortation all of which do something to the believer in accordance with God's word. In this regard, this chapter investigates biblical language of promise, warning, and exhortation in the message of the kingdom proclaimed by Jesus. It illustrates with the Beatitudes as a language of promise, the Parable of the Sower as a language of warning and the Parable of the Ten Virgins as a language of exhortation. These performative aspects of biblical language urge us to do something to achieve God's purpose in our Christian lives through the inherent linguistic force of the utterances. Therefore, the performative dimension of biblical language provides an alternative criterion for evaluating the Christian life in a broken world.

2.2 The Kingdom of God as Language of Promise in the Beatitudes

The biblical texts frequently address the reader as warnings, commands, invitations, judgements, promises or pledges of love (Thiselton 2006a:86).

Barth (1964:9) notes that the unique power of the Bible flows from the fact that the biblical words are words of love between God and humanity. The Word of God is seen as a divine promise between God and God's people that would help them to fulfil God's kingdom and God's will. The language of promise is closely linked to the proclamatory word which employs a manner of speaking of the end of time or the end of the world. The designation "eschatological" is used to describe that end-time in order to arouse the feeling of the imminence of a crisis and the need to make an urgent decision to change one's life (Ricoeur 1981:165). The sayings of Jesus have aesthetic value in the sense that they have the power to move the hearer to decision or action. The Beatitudes are a good example of such sayings.

Some scholars regard the Beatitudes as ethical demands that people observe to ensure their admittance into God's eschatological kingdom (Windisch 1951:26-31; Strecker 1988:33; Hannan 2006:47). Others regard the Beatitudes as promises of eschatological blessings for those who have responded to God's saving call in Jesus Christ which give assurance of participation in the future consummation (Guelich 1976:415-434; Allison 1999:42-44). Talbert (2006:47) argues that the Matthean Jesus had already called and attracted disciples and was now addressing the sermon to His disciples. Furthermore, given that in Matthew's Gospel grace underlies every human achievement, the Beatitudes cannot be regarded as entrance requirements but rather as promises of eschatological blessings.

The language of promise offers useful examples of the variability between explicit and implicit speech acts, between instances when vocabulary may

seem to signal an illocution and when an illocutionary act of promise occurs without the use of expected vocabulary. Most promissory acts in the biblical text do not use the word “promise” directly but in many cases, they are replaced by declarative language. These include, for example, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Mt 5:3); “I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Mt 28:20); or “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Acts 2:21). In fact, the Beatitudes are described as promises of eschatological blessings and expectations of the future consummation but they also contain what to do in everyday life in order to attain those future blessings. In other words, the language of promise represents not only future things which are not yet fulfilled in terms of the yet unseen goal but it also offers guidelines about how to live the everyday life. That is, the Beatitudes relate to both moral visions and promises of eschatological blessings for God’s people.

Most scholars agree that there is a reading of Matthew 5:3-10 that sees in the text a portrait of the disciples’ ideal relationship with God (5:3-6) and with others (5:7-10), sometimes described in terms of virtuous behaviour (cf. Stott 1978:54). Matthew 5:3-12 contains nine Beatitudes. According to Dunn (1975:55-60), the Beatitudes are linked to Isaiah 61:1-2 which says, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.” The passage can be viewed not only as Jesus’ specific institutional position and role under God’s sovereignty but also as an essential clue to the Beatitudes.

The first four Beatitudes describe the disciples' ideal relationship with God. The hungry, poor, meek, and captives in "Blessed are the poor in spirit" (3), "Blessed are those who mourn" (4), "Blessed are the meek" (5), and "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst" (6) can be seen as synonymous. Their conditions or situations are not perfect; therefore, they need God. In Isaiah 61:2, the poor are synonymous with the broken-hearted, the captives, those who are bound, and those who mourn. In Isaiah 11:4, the poor are synonymous with the meek (Hamm 1990:84; cf. Isa 11:4; 29:19). In Amos 2:6-7, the poor are paralleled with the righteous, the needy, and the afflicted. They are those who embrace the poverty of their condition by trusting in God (Keener 1999:169) and humbling themselves before God (Hamm 1990:78). Those who mourn (4) are associated with repentance as in Joel 2:12-13 which says, "Return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning, and rend your hearts, not your clothing." Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness (6) point to God's saving activity which establishes justice. Isaiah 51:6 says, "My salvation will be forever and my deliverance will never be ended."

The last four Beatitudes focus on horizontal relationships. In v.7, we have, "Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy." What does it mean for one to be merciful? In James 2:13, we see that, "Judgement will be without mercy to anyone who has shown no mercy." If we have no mercy on others, we cannot obtain God's mercy either. Verse 8 says, "Blessed are the pure in heart". This point can be clarified by James 4:8 which says, "Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded." Pure hearts are required for both the outer and inner ethical stance of the person before the people. In v.9, the statement, "Blessed are the peacemakers" means one has to cultivate the love of peace as in Romans 12:18 which commands, "If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all." Verses

10-12 say, “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness;” “Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account,” and these correspond with 1 Peter 3:14 which says, “but even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed.” Similar sentiments are echoed in Matthew 10:24-25, Acts 4:3, 5:17-18 and Galatians 4:29. This means that even when they experience persecution, Christians should embrace their oppressors, as Jesus would have done.

To sum up, the content of the Beatitudes is twofold. One is the promise of eschatological blessings while the other is a portrait of the recipients of these blessings. In other words, the first four blessings deal with the disciples’ vertical relationship and the last five have to do with horizontal relationships. The Beatitudes contain a portrait of and promises to the disciples as the following Table by Talbert (2006:48) shows:

Portrait	Promise
Blessed... poor in spirit	Theirs is the kingdom of heaven
Blessed ... those who mourn	They shall be comforted
Blessed... the meek	They shall inherit the earth
Blessed... those who hunger and thirst for righteousness	They shall be satisfied
Blessed... the merciful	They shall receive mercy
Blessed... the pure in heart	They shall see God
Blessed... the peacemakers	They shall be called children of God
Blessed... those persecuted for righteousness’ sake	Theirs is the kingdom of heaven

Blessed are you when reviled, persecuted, defamed	Your heavenly reward is great
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The nature of promise in the biblical text presupposes institutional facts which underlie such illocutions as promise or commitment and rests on the covenant relationship through God's divine power as expressed in the Beatitudes. The blessed life that Jesus proclaimed in the Beatitudes is not a private but a communal form of life that has social and political implication (Hauerwas 2011:262). Thus, the act of promise brings to light most clearly the commitments and responsibilities of the agents of promise within an inter-subjective public, extra-linguistic world of ethical undertaking and address (Thiselton 2006b:126). According to Davis (1994:215), "the Criterion of individuation of illocutionary acts like promising... is not individualistic." Furthermore, "An act of promising depends on the linguistic practice of a speaker's linguistic community... an utterance of 'I promise to do A' will place him 'under an obligation to do A'" (Davis 1994:216). Searle (1969:58, 60) maintains that the statements "'I promise' and 'I hereby promise' are among the strongest illocutionary force indicating devices for *commitment* in the English language... The essential feature of a promise is that it is the undertaking of an obligation to perform a certain act" (*his italics*). In the case of speech acts performed within a language, it is a matter of convention that the utterance and its expressions under certain conditions constitute the making of a promise. That is to say, the statement or utterance "X made a promise", including such notions as speaker/text's intentions and manner of behaviour; it is important for a speaker to express the proposition that promises in the utterance of text. In this perspective, the promise as a primary content of divine speech stands in tension between what should be and what will be in the description of the present.

Unlike the Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes as the promissory speech act of the biblical covenants do not follow regulative rules but constitutive rules. According to Searle (1969:33), regulative rules regulate independently existing forms of behaviour which characteristically have the form or can be comfortably paraphrased in the form “Do X” or “If Y do X.” On the other hand, constitutive rules do not merely regulate; they create or define new forms of behaviour which often have the form “X counts as Y” or “X counts as Y in context C” (Searle 1969:33-35). For example, the first Beatitude can be expressed as “the poor in spirit counts as having kingdom of heaven in the context of the promises of God’s blessing.” To say “I bless you” or “I promise you” is to perform a speech-act of implied behaviour or commitment that would be determined by speech. This promise is a performative language that is not just saying something but is also an action. The concept of covenant provides a certain paradigm of the broader role of institutional facts that provide foundations for valid illocutionary acts. Such promises claim special status as a speech-act in the context of covenant (Thiselton 2006c:146). These promises contain specific conditions through which a speaker takes on certain responsibilities (Searle 1969:62). Specifically, performative force depends on a situation in which one’s linguistic act “counts as” what sets the illocution in force (Searle 1969:65). Therefore, the promissory language of Jesus in the Beatitudes can transform situations to fit the eschatological blessing of promise which is primary and life changing.

How then can the promissory language transform the world of reality? Language can bring the world of reality into what has been written or spoken. When Jesus declares, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Mt 5:3), the utterance entails a “world-to-word” fit (Searle 1976:10-16; 1979:10-20) which is to transform the world by the future course of action of the speaker. In fact, the “world-to-word fit” aspect of biblical

texts arises from the content of promise in the biblical text. This divine promise bridges the gap between what is and what ought to be, and it is interwoven with the themes of covenant and eschatology (Thiselton 2006a:92). That is to say, the performative dimension of the language of promise can be viewed as the cognitive propositional statement in the text and its illocutionary act in relation to the notion of covenant and of eschatology.

As we have seen, the Beatitudes are God's eschatological blessing of promise to God's people backed by God's divine force. They offer us hope in life and direction in the world as to what should we do with the anticipation of the consummation of the kingdom of God in the fullness of time even though we are not perfect and experience serious problems. Pannenberg (1998:545) points out the importance of promise in the present including the continuity of action by future hope in God. He says, "The promise put the human present, with all the pain of its incompleteness and failure, in the light of God that comes to us as our salvation... the concept of promise links our present to God's future" (1998:545).

Similarly, Moltmann (1967:24) argues that the gospel is promise and contains hope for the future rejecting any despair. Moreover, "Christian eschatology as the language of promise will then be an essential key to the unlocking of Christian truth" (Moltmann 1967:41). Therefore, this performative aspect of biblical language of promise refers to divine action, which renders the truth of God in the believing community a reality in contemporary life and acts as a guideline for the life of faith in practical ways and not as an abstract ideal.

2.3 The Kingdom of God as Language of Warning in the Parable of the Sower⁹

Jesus told parables of the kingdom of God for specific purposes. The words of Jesus were intended to produce action in the people and help them to follow God's will. The language of Jesus about the kingdom of God creates a world into which he draws his hearers. The hearer does not merely observe this world as a spectator but becomes an active participant and a respondent who shares God's perspectives. Thiselton (1970:445) observes the relationship between the hearer and the world of the parables:

When a hearer enters the “world” of the parable and of its language, new horizons of meaning come to view which may expose him to unexpected verdicts. If he *believes* the words of Jesus, he accepts his place in this “world”, and strives to readjust his own horizon until *his* world is also the world of Jesus (*his italics*).

In particular, the parable of the sower contains an appropriate response to the message as language of warning. In the context of warning, Isaiah 6:9-10¹⁰ provides insight into the interpretation of the parable of the sower (Foster & Shiell 1997:259). The statements “Listen!” and “Let anyone with ears to hear listen!” (Mk 4:9; Lk 8:8) are crucial indicators for the hearer to pay attention to the speaker's specific intention which is not just an utterance of warning but a requisite for the hearer to do something about the words of the speaker. This language performs an illocutionary act which has a certain conventional force that under certain conditions constitutes the issuing of a warning. In the

⁹ See Matthew 13:1-23, Mark 4:1-9 and Luke 8:1-10.

¹⁰ Isaiah 6:9-10 says, “Go and tell this people: ‘Be ever hearing, but never understanding; be ever seeing, but never perceiving.’ Make the heart of this people calloused; make their ears dull and close their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed.”

biblical language, the dimension of an illocutionary act helps to bring the world into conformity with the purposes of God. According to Searle (1969:43), to say that a speaker S meant something by X is to say that S intended the utterance of X to produce some effect in a hearer H by means of the recognition of this intention. This suggests that by simply uttering the appropriate words, the speaker, exercising authority, brings about a conventional or institutional state of affairs (Evans 1963:33). To put this point more precisely, the utterance of a warning serves as the undertaking of an obligation which takes place under conventional rules. In biblical language, the purpose of the language of warning is not to threaten the hearer but to enable him or her to act in accordance with God's desire. As High (1967:150) has noted, "Believing is not describing something... it is doing something." This shows that the hearer reacts to the word of warning, and by believing in the word of God as divine authority, it would become true as a feasible covenant. Therefore, it is important to understand certain kinds of effects that the speaker's message have on his/her hearer.

In this regard, the hearer's response to the kingdom messages takes the form of hearing, understanding, and doing (Mt 13:23; Mk 4:20; Lk 8:15). The order of the verbs is instructive, as Bruner (1990:495) explains:

But the seed sown on the good earth is the person who *listening* to the Word *understands* it; this person of course bears fruit and *does* things (Matthew 13:23). Hearing comes first ("faith comes by *hearing*," Rom 10:17), understanding comes next (Matthew's special way of describing true faith), and the doing of fruit bearing then naturally (*de* "of course"!) follows (*his italics*).

In fact, the parable of the sower is a parable about the message of the kingdom. It is closely linked to how to hear, how to understand without distorting the speaker's purpose, and how to act on the message. In Mark, the parable begins and ends with a focus on hearing while Matthew uses the word *akouein* fifteen times but also uses the verb *sunienai* (understand) in 13:13, 14, 15, 19, 23, 51 (Snodgrass 2008:152). Matthew asks, "Do you really understand with your heart?" Whereas Mark asks, "Do you really hear Jesus' message?" Luke also uses *akouein* nine times and adds that, "the seed (the word) is the word of God" (8:11). Hearing requires openness and receptivity – openness to God and a willingness to hear and obey which is the opposite of a hard heart. Without openness and the willingness to obey, the required hearing is impossible (Snodgrass 2013:286). Precisely, to hear means that the hearer clearly understands the speaker's point of view, and does not just focus on his or her thought in an abstract but a specific way. "To hear" means "to obey"; true hearing leads to obedience of the speaker's request. Therefore, the importance of hearing does not lie merely in hearing but in the hearing that leads to action in accordance with the illocutionary act.

The concern for the kingdom is obvious in Jesus' statement that the "secret" of the kingdom is revealed to God's people and not to outsiders. "Mystery (secret)" in the Semitic context does not refer to what is unknown but to revelation from God (Brown 1968:31-35). The parable hides in order to reveal (Boucher 1977:53; Wright 1996:174-182). The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom was revealed to the people of God but hidden from ordinary people. In other words, the presence of the kingdom of God was revealed to those who heard and responded to the word in order to enable them attain the kingdom in the world. This indicates that the words of Jesus constitute institutional facts having divine authority on the state of affairs only within the true Christian community, and should govern patterns of

behaviour in the present life. The words of Jesus perform acts according to certain rules and the people of God receive his words as divine force in the form of warning, command and advice, which take effect within their communities as a new reality in accordance with the sayings of Jesus. To put this point more precisely, what Jesus said, how he acted and how he helped the people to understand and respond to his teaching and preaching continue to affect the world today. Thus, the believing community needs to recognise the words of Jesus as God's authoritative performative action. It should be noted that language and words are not neutral carriers of meaning, but they are actually effective and accomplish something (Austin 1975:6; Searle 1969:12). This performative aspect of biblical language refers to the mystery of divine action, which reveals the truth of God's word in human history. Stated differently, language creates a world, and Jesus' proclamation of the presence of the kingdom opens up a new reality within us.

Thus, the parable of the sower is seen as a prophetic tool to warn, confront, and instruct people to hear God's message and respond affirmatively. The parable speaks of sowing seeds in four different settings as outlined below:

Circumstance	Effect
Along the path	Birds come and eat the seed
On rocky ground	The sun rises and scorches the seedling
Among thorn bushes	Thorns choke the seed
On good ground	The seed bears fruit in varying amounts

The parable of the sower shows that sometimes seeds sown are unfruitful and in some other cases, they are fruitful. The seed sown on each soil is identified as “the word of the kingdom,” thereby showing that this is a kingdom parable. The point is that under certain circumstances, seeds that are sown in a field are subject to hostile realities such as birds, scorching sun, and thorns. In the first instance, where the seed was sown “along the path”, the problem is described as failure to understand. Those who do not receive the message do not understand it because birds eat up the seed, and this is interpreted as the evil one who “snatches away what is sown in the heart.” In the second instance, the seed fell on stony ground and immediately produced shoots. The one who hears the word and at once receives it with joy but has no root cannot overcome trouble or persecution. This shows that one must move from the level of hearing to the level of action; without a response, the disciple would not bear fruit. Like the second, the third instance also emphasises the importance of doing. The seed falls among thorn bushes, grew and became choked by the plants. The thorns are seen as the anxieties of life and the seduction of riches which can constitute an obstacle to discipleship and thwart the appropriate response to the message of the kingdom. In the last instance, the seed falls on good soil and produces thirty, sixty or a hundred fold harvests. The one who receives the seed is one who hears the word and understands it. Understanding results in a proper response of conduct; hearing does not just mean understanding an utterance but doing something in response to the speaker’s words. The fruit does not refer merely to productivity but also to maturity. The seed keeps producing (*edidou*, an imperfect tense), but the high yield may also be an allusion to eschatological fulfilment (Hagner 2000:104).¹¹

¹¹ According to Bailey (1998:179), sowing and harvesting are recognised metaphors for the eschatological expectation of the kingdom throughout the Old Testament (Jer 31:27; Eze 36:9; Hos 2:23; Mt 9:35-38).

The concept of the mystery of the kingdom in this parable has to do with the reception of the message by God's people. Boucher (1977:83) insists that, "The mystery has to do entirely with one's willingness to receive the eschatological and ethical teaching of Jesus." Keener (1999:38) also observes that, "The only conversations that count in the kingdom are those confirmed by a life of discipleship." Stated differently, the good soil encourages the disciples to hear and understand the word of the kingdom, to do the work of the kingdom, and to bear fruit. Therefore, the parable of the sower provides a forceful challenge to the hearers with the warnings "Listen!" and "Those who have ears to hear, let them hear!" in order to establish God's kingdom in the present life as God's disciples. This means that, "The one who is spiritually illumined is the one who bears fruit for God" (Toussaint 1964:353).

2.4 The Kingdom of God as Language of Exhortation in the Parable of the Ten Virgins

The Gospel of Matthew clearly shows that the statement "Jesus is Lord, King and Messiah" points to Jesus' specific institutional position and role under God's sovereignty in order to prepare God's people for the consummation and realisation of the kingdom of God in the fullness of time. The concern for the kingdom requires a sense of responsibility and accountability to God on the part of the believers through the language of exhortation. In the Bible, this language is closely linked to the Christological language, that is, Messianic language. The Messianic language shows Jesus' identity, authority and status in the performative utterance which is able to do something to the believers as the language of exhortation. Like the language of warning in the biblical text, the language of recommendation contains the command word which refers to the end of time and from which the designation "eschatological" comes. This shows us how to live as Christians and what we ought to do

before God in our daily lives as we hope for the future and prepare for the end of the age.

God/Jesus is seen as the bridegroom of God's people in the narrative sequence in the parable of the ten virgins. The image of Jesus as Lord and bridegroom (France 2000:181) points to Jesus' messianic character. According to Thiselton (2006a:76-81), it can be demonstrated that the words of Jesus in his narrative texts are speech acts with an illocutionary point such as exercitive, directive and verdictive. For example, Jesus says, "My son, your sins are [hereby] forgiven" (Mk 2:5; Mt 9:2; Lk 5:20); "Peace! Be still" (Mk 4:35-41; Mt 8:23-27; Lk 8:22-25); "Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour" (Mt 25:13). In this viewpoint, the speaker's intention leads to the illocutionary act and the illocutionary act in Jesus' saying can be ascribed to his identity and specific state of affairs. Therefore, the identity of Jesus should "govern interpretation of conventional 'messianic' language rather than that ready-made assumptions about the meaning of such language should govern an understanding of Jesus" (Thiselton 2006a:80).

Furthermore, this parable relates to the watchfulness of the believers for the day or the hour of the Lord as a language of exhortation¹² (Kümmel 1957:54-59; Marshall 1963:40-43; Gundry 1994:500-502). The statements, "Lord, Lord, open to us (11)", "Truly I tell you, I do not know you (12)". "Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour (13)" contain

¹² The language of warning has a different meaning from the language of exhortation. The language of warning requires the attention of the hearer, but the words of exhortation offer suggestion about doing something.

typical Christological language and the hearers' accountability as a response to the words of the speaker. The hearer should distinguish between what is "said" as a propositional content and the illocutionary act of an utterance in which an act is performed through an utterance in order to grasp the speaker's intention. In this case, a propositional language refers only to a fact or situation without the meaning. For instance, the foolish virgins got to the wedding celebration too late, the door was closed, and they asked, "Lord, open for us"; but he did not. Rather, he said, "Truly I tell you, I do not know you. Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour." On the other hand, the illocutionary act of an utterance points to the performance of an act which says something as having the force of what we do by speaking. This indicates that we must "be prepared" for the coming kingdom as Christians who do what they ought to do.

Similarly, Campbell (2000:39) argues that the words of Jesus contain the most significant prophetic parables about the coming kingdom and the believer's sense of responsibility to God is captured in the Parable of the Ten Virgins:

This Gospel presents the constitution of the kingdom of the heaven, unveiling the spiritual living and heavenly principle of the kingdom of the heavens. Such a living with its principles is according to the righteousness which surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees (5:20), and it is carried out through the righteous deeds of the kingdom of people (6:1)... thus according to the general thought of Matthew, it is right to interpret many of the Lord's words in this book as the word of righteousness concerning the believer's accountability to God in the light of the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom reward.

The above view causes us to ask how the message of the kingdom builds up the people of God in and for the world. In other words, Christians should consider how to live and act in the world in hope of the consummation and realisation of the kingdom of God where God's reign is fulfilled. Christians do not merely assert certain facts about God's sovereignty; they address God in the act of committing themselves to God's kingdom and apply their minds to its righteousness.

In fact, this parable encourages Christians to grow to maturity in the divine life. A mature Christian life prepares for the kingdom of God with readiness and watchfulness in the present. The term virgin refers to the believer. The bridesmaids are divided into two groups – “wise” and “foolish.” The virgins all waited for the bridegroom and took their lamps but the foolish ones did not take oil with them; only the wise took extra oil in their jars with their lamps. While the foolish virgins went to buy oil, the bridegroom came. The wise virgins went in with him to the wedding feast, and the door was shut. The foolish virgins returned and asked the bridegroom to “open the door” but he did not. Rather, he said, “Truly I tell you, I do not know you. Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.” This shows the importance of readiness in the life of the believer and of genuine faith. All ten virgins had lamps but this is not the central issue in this text. The point is the preparedness; they should have taken extra oil along. Alford (1980:249) argues that the foolish virgins represent a dead faith having only the lamp without the light. We must remember that only the wise virgins who prepared extra oil could join the bridegroom at the wedding feast, which means the believers should be ready at all times with watchfulness. Henry (1961:372) shows that:

Our great duty is to watch, to attend to the business of our souls with the utmost diligence and circumspection... Every day and every hour we must be ready, and not off our watch any day in the year, or any hour in the day. Be thou in the fear of the Lord every day and all the day long.

In this parable, “wise virgins” symbolise readiness, watchfulness and faithfulness which can be regarded as synonymous with maturity and with true Christianity. In other words, to live as a wise virgin means to be prepared for God’s reign or kingdom which means living in ways that conform to the character of the kingdom and being faithful at all times (Snodgrass 2008:518). A genuine faith lives by the resurrection power of the crucified Jesus Christ, and longs after the promise of the universal future of Christ’s coming (Moltmann 1967:15-16). Christian faith in Jesus Christ also requires a longing for God’s complete sovereignty in order to be an active participant and not just a spectator in the world. The readiness and watchfulness are not passive traits but enable one to act positively and actively in accordance with the words of Jesus. This point implies that the believer should live everyday based on true Christian identity and in faith in the language of recommendation from God to God’s people such as “Keep awake”. That is to say, the word of exhortation has implications for the kingdom of God through moral human action.

Believers who are the kingdom people are like “wise virgins”. Being a wise virgin is not a matter of what we do or what we ought to do. Rather, it is absolutely a matter of what we are. Knowing what we are helps remind us of what we ought to do and how we should prepare for the kingdom as Christians. The wise virgins knew exactly what they were doing because they knew that they were genuine believers who acted in readiness, watchfulness

and faithfulness and who hoped for the coming of the kingdom of God. Thus, the question of what we believe or how to live in the present precedes what we ought to do before God and people or how we ought to act based on our faith.

Interestingly, even though this text speaks about the “wedding banquet”, which is central to the wedding feast of the bride and bridegroom, the parable does not mention the “bride”. Alford (1980:248) points out that the Bible refers to the parable of the wedding feast in Matthew 22:1-14 and to that of the virgins in Matthew 25. However, “In both the wedding parables the bride does not appear – for she, being the Church, is in fact the aggregate of the guests in the one case, and of the companions in the other.” Similarly, Lange (1978:248) notes that:

The virgins are not merely companions of the bride, but representatives of the bride, the Church... The Church, in her aggregate and ideal unity, is the bride; the members of the Church, as individually called, are guests; in their separation from the world, and expectation of the Lord’s coming, they are His virgins.

This observation suggests that the virgins represent the bride and the Church, that is, the believing community. These messages about the kingdom of God in Jesus’ teaching and preaching are actualised only within the Christian community. Jesus’ parables about the kingdom were meant only for God’s disciples and not those on the outside, which demonstrates that the words of Jesus constitute institutional facts having divine power only within the Christian community to establish patterns of behaviour for everyday life. In the performative dimension of biblical words, it is a fact that what is spoken

creates what will be, as in, “Let there be light” (Gen 1:3) and “If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her” (Jn 8:7). In this viewpoint, the performative dimension of the words of Jesus creates a new reality and enables the believers to do something by inherent language force in accordance with the words of Jesus. Therefore, all genuinely performative utterances aim to produce something in the community and society, and not simply to describe the state of affairs they represent which constitutes their propositional content (Searle 1979:18).

2.5 Summary and Conclusion of Chapter

This chapter has investigated features of the three biblical language forms about the kingdom of God namely promise, warning, and exhortation in the context of cognitive propositional language in order to determine its ethical dimensions. In particular, we have noted that each of the three language forms about the kingdom of God in the Jesus’ parables demonstrates divine activity as inherent language force that enables the Christian community to fulfil God’s will in the present. The propositional language in biblical writings indicates not only fact or statement but at the same time meaning and a meaningful act. To put this point more precisely, a text refers to its propositional content as what is “said” in which the text itself has a meaningful act; what the text is doing (performative action), and not merely what it means (objective of the theme).

Language creates new reality. It can bring into being a world of reality to what has been written or spoken. From this perspective, the words of Jesus about the kingdom constitute institutional facts which have divine force on

state of affairs only within the genuine Christian community under God's sovereign rule, and the words should govern patterns of behaviour in ordinary life. The message of the kingdom proclaimed by Jesus is not about a private but communal form of life that is displayed socially as a portrait of the disciples' ideal relation to God and to others. In fact, moral sensibilities are about what is right and wrong or what we should do and about an overlapping awareness of what kinds of human institutions and practices are necessary to sustain the common life. Therefore, the words of Jesus should be the pattern for Christian action and his identity should govern the realistic content of the ethics of God's kingdom. According to Chilton (1987:19-20), the "performance of the kingdom" implies that Jesus manifested the reign of God in his time in the form of miracles and parables, in action and in word. Chilton (1987:24, 31) further stresses the relationship between the Jesus' parables and human action in the kingdom of God:

To read the parables is itself an acknowledgment that human action might be implicated in God's kingdom; to believe them is actually to undertake appropriate action, the parabolic action of the kingdom, in the present. Because the kingdom is of a God whose claims are absolute, it necessarily addresses itself to people as a cognitive and an ethical challenge at one and the same time.

Thus, Christian moral knowledge and its testimony perform something in accordance with the kingdom of God proclaimed by Jesus, which means those sovereign intentional acts about God's kingdom do promise, warn, and exhort God's people who are called to be God's true disciples.

The performative dimension of biblical language as an inherent linguistic force leads to an engagement with Christian ethics by reconsidering the religious language of the kingdom of God between the cognitive-propositional model of religious language and the performative-ontological model of religious language in two areas. The first relates to the meaning of the ethics of the kingdom and the second to the performance of the ethics of the kingdom. The Christian has to consider the notion of the ethics of the kingdom as an informative proposition. In this sense, the meaning of the message of the kingdom in the words of the text is the *propositional content* by which the believing community produces Christian ethics as the *notion of the aspect of the life or the moralistic theme*.

However, the Christian community shows the biblical language to be performative, as it demonstrates not only what it meant but also the process of accomplishing that meaning. This performative aspect of the religious biblical language is a meaningful and intentional divine action, which is closely linked to eschatology as the language of the promise, warning, and exhortation between God and God's people. It is important to make a decision and to change one's life in a practical way while hoping for the coming of the kingdom of God. Thus, Christianity or Christian ethics has an impact on how we live and what we do in contemporary life as it helps us to change our hearts and behaviour in a practical way. That is to say, the words of Jesus also constitute divine performative action under God's reign, and they carry the force to change the inner construct of the human heart as well as the outer construct of human attitude to conform to God's will. This perspective on Jesus' saying enables us to distinguish between the meaning and the force of what the message of the kingdom says.

Furthermore, the performative dimension of biblical language helps to remind us of the praxis of the ethics of the kingdom. The Bible is not supposed to be interpreted only in an academic context, but it is to be performed by the people of God in order to fulfil God's will and participate in the establishment of God's kingdom in contemporary life as they seek to link the words of Scripture and their responses in the world. Thus, Christians should be learning to live faithfully before God by embodying, or living according to, the message of Scripture. Fowl and Jones (1991:29-80) observe the relationship between the interpretation of Scripture and the embodying of Scripture (framed in relation to Christian ethics):

The interpretation of Scripture is ... a lifelong process of learning to become a wise reader of Scripture capable of embodying that reading in life. Learning to embody Scripture in our lives, both corporately and personally, requires that we develop specific patterns of acting, feeling and thinking well. This is an exercise in practical reasoning and depends on being able to judge a certain situation as being similar in some respect to another situation, moral maxim, or canonical text... We still need to address how Scripture is related both to the various contexts in which we live and to other possible sources for ethical guidance...because the world remains a part of God's good creation... We are enabled to live in a way that faithfully witnesses to God's kingdom.

This suggests that the Christian community should try to discover the text's momentum and its function in order to build up the people of God to live in the world, and to participate in the activities of the kingdom of God not as a spectator but as active participants in the present world. In other words, members of the Christian community are called to institute policies in specific ways as God's disciples according to the message of the kingdom and God's will. It not only refers to what we should do as Christians but what we

are in relation to God since the aim of biblical interpretation is to enable us to live our everyday life in the situations in which we find ourselves according to the characters, convictions, and practices related in the Scripture (Fowl & Jones 1991:19-21).

That is to say, we should distinguish between what the message of the kingdom intends to say and what it intends to do. A social ethical approach to this performative dimension of the kingdom of God as a mortified action is not only aimed at reconstructing meanings of the coming kingdom in the form of a propositional morality theme. It is also aimed at reconstructing the Christian life in which the Christian becomes an active participant in the public domain ethically, i.e., in terms of the presence of God's kingdom and its witness. The ethical reflection on the kingdom of God would not simply clarify the text's central theme or shape a re-narration of the story of the kingdom of God in Jesus' teaching. Rather, encountering God's kingdom is a continuous process of performing God's righteousness under God's sovereign guidance. Christians ought to commit themselves to God's kingdom, naturally applying their minds to its righteousness in the broken world. This conviction regarding the message of the kingdom seems to stem in a certain sense from the illocutionary act and perlocutionary act of language.¹³ Thus, the Christian moral knowledge may be identified according to the illocutionary act in the message of the kingdom which refers to what the text is doing by what it is saying. In this sense, the kingdom passages would imply that the insight from the illocutionary force has permeated Christian ethical theory

¹³ According to the speech act theory, the performative aspect of language can be identified in the following three areas when one uses the word/text - (1) The locutionary act: uttering words; (2) The illocutionary act: what we do in saying something; (3) The perlocutionary act: what we bring about by saying something (Austin 1975:98-108).

and it should be used to rethink the notion of divine intention in terms of illocutionary act in order to do God's will. Hence, this ethical perspective will benefit from the descriptive power of the speech act theory with regard to the link between the word of the kingdom and biblical ethics. Furthermore, the performative dimension of biblical language will provide an alternative criterion for evaluating Christian patterns of behaviour and it will focus on how Christian ethics is understood as the performance of the illocutionary force in the message of the kingdom. Therefore, the next chapter will suggest a way forward through the application of speech act theory.

CHAPTER 3

AN ALTERNATIVE LINGUISTIC EPISTEMOLOGY FOR MORAL PERFORMANCE FROM THE CONTEXT OF THE KINGDOM IN THE LIGHT OF SPEECH ACT THEORY (SAT)

3.1 Chapter Introduction

In the previous chapter, we have mentioned the possibility of using the performative dimension of biblical language in the message of the kingdom to explain the dimension of Christian morality according to illocutionary speech acts. This consideration seems to offer an alternative criterion for evaluating the Christian way of life in the relationship between text and praxis. To put this point more precisely, the ethics of the kingdom of God may be identified in terms of the illocutionary act as having inherent linguistic force in the biblical passage (what the text is doing based on what it is saying). In this view, the performative dimension of biblical language in the texts about the kingdom proclaimed by Jesus suggests that insights from speech act theory (SAT) have permeated Christian ethical theory. Thus, this chapter will suggest an alternative linguistic epistemology in the light of SAT for moral performance in the context of the kingdom of God.

The performative dimension of the kingdom in the biblical text is not only aimed at retelling the meanings of the kingdom in the form of a propositional theme but also at reconstructing the Christian life as performative force in

terms of the presence of God's kingdom and its living disciples. In other words, the ethics of the kingdom does not merely refer to the performance of meaningful actions in the Christian community but also performing a meaningful action in contemporary life. This leads us in this chapter to investigate what Christian ethical applications emerge from a Speech Act Theory approach to the presence of the kingdom of God. The gap between the meaning of the kingdom and its application could be bridged from the perspective of SAT. Hence, the purpose of this chapter is to survey briefly the methods and terminologies employed in the SAT, particularly in the works of the so-called speech act theory pioneer JL Austin and his student JR Searle. Furthermore, the chapter will show how their view applies to Christian ethical theories in the context of the kingdom. In addition, the concepts of illocutionary action, institutional facts, constitutive rules and direction of fit will be examined in order to explain the moral vision of Scripture. Therefore, the SAT approach could offer new criteria for understanding Christian ethics in terms of the relationship between the biblical text and biblical application.

3.2 Speech Act Theory (SAT)¹⁴

Speech act theory is a theory of language use and its effects. In the field of language philosophy, this theory was initially introduced by Austin in “*How to Do Things with Words*” (first published in 1962), and his student Searle in his two volumes, “*Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*” (1969) and “*Expression and Meaning: Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts*” (1979). Austin examines the effects of different kinds of utterances in conversations and other speech acts between a speaker and a hearer, that is, the performative aspect of language usage. This theory insists that a speaker is not merely uttering sounds, words or statement but is performing an action as language itself; a theory of language is part of a theory of action; and speaking a language is performing speech acts (Searle 1969:16-17). This is what the speech act theory (SAT) is all about. The SAT primarily relates to the performative language of the original characteristics and the operation of

¹⁴ The scope of this project does not allow me to fully situate SAT within the broader developments and contours of the discourse on the philosophy of language. However, my aim is to show how SAT helps to bridge the gap between the message of the kingdom and its praxis in Christian ethics not as a comprehensive philosophy of language but as a hermeneutical resource. However, for situated clarity I shall provide some background and history of SAT at this juncture. Austin’s concept of SAT began with the question of how we are to do things with words that are used in ordinary or daily life. This discourse has its roots in the works of philosophers of language that precede Austin, for example Wittgenstein and Searle Please also see Aristotle, in *De Interpretatione*. Trans. By H.P. Cook in 1938, London: Loeb Classical Library; Reid, T. (1788), in his *Essays on the Active Powers of Man*. London: Oxford University Press; Husser, E. *Logical Investigations*. Trans. By J.N. Findlay in 1970, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, for more detailed information on the history of SAT. Please also see Smith, B. (1990) “Towards a History of Speech Act Theory” in Burkhard, (ed.), *Speech Acts, Meaning and Intentions: Critical Approaches to the Philosophy of John R. Searle*. Berlin: W. de Gruyter, pp. 29-61. It is worth noting that while Wittgenstein (1953:11-12) was neither a founder of the Speech Act Theory nor a speech act theorist, his later philosophical work can be seen as a discourse of language use in daily life (in particular this can be seen in relation to concepts such as asking, thanking, cursing, greeting and praying, which all relate to an action). It is possible to see a correlation between this work and Austin’s speech act theory, even though Austin himself was not impressed by Wittgenstein, but practised philosophy in a way which was certainly congruent with his main emphases (Hacker1996: 172-175).

language utterance which produce certain effects in accordance with the speaker's communication to the hearer.

3.2.1 JL Austin – speaking a language, (the utterance) is performative

Speaking is a form of action because it conveys the speaker's specific purpose to the hearer. This fact leads us to ask, what kind of acts should we perform by speaking? Austin offers a clue to this question in his book, *How to Do Things with Words*.¹ Performative utterance can be identified as performative or a performative sentence. He classifies utterances into two namely constative utterances and performative utterances. While the constative utterance describes some state of affairs or informative fact as true or false, the performative is a performative utterance act.

However, Austin (1975:4-5) notes that the “constative” in language use performs a particular action just as the performative utterance. This occurs in utterances such as “I do” (in a marriage ceremony), “I name this ship the Queen Elizabeth” (in christening a ship), “I give and bequeath my watch to my brother” (in a will), or “I bet you sixpence it will rain tomorrow” (in a bet). Moreover, when before the registrar or at the altar, one says, “I do,” one is not reporting on the marriage ceremony but participating in it (Austin 1975:6). This indicates that both performative and constative utterances are similar in that they are both actions in speech. The utterance involves the performing of an action which shows that speaking a language implies a performative action rather than a specific state of affairs or set of facts. That is to say, statements are supposed to do something. Therefore, Austin (1975:94-107) argues that in terms of the performative utterance, three action

structures should be distinguished in speech namely the locutionary, the illocutionary, and the perlocutionary acts.

In a certain sense, the locution is basic for the performance of an act and it can be divided into the phonetic act, the phatic act, and the rhetic act.¹⁵ The locutionary act is the performance of the act of saying something which presents itself at the level of utterance. This is closely linked to the surface of the utterance in terms of the propositional element or meaning such as vocabulary and grammar which demonstrates what has been said or written. The propositional dimension contains the information to be communicated between a speaker/text and a hearer/reader.

The illocutionary act on the other hand is the performance of an act in saying something as opposed to the performance of an act of saying something. This only takes place within a conventional rule such as that operated by a given community, which is based on the illocutionary act influencing what we do in saying something. The intent of the speaker in the language act is communicated in the form of an intentional act. Thus, the act of speech is given an illocutionary force in accordance with the speaker's specific intent to promise, warn, and exhort the hearer to act in a certain way using language.

¹⁵ According to Austin (1975:95), "The phonetic act is merely the act of uttering certain noises. The phatic act is the uttering of certain vocables or words, i.e. noises of certain types, belonging to and as belonging to, a certain vocabulary, conforming to and as conforming to a certain grammar. The rhetic act is the performance of an act of using those vocables with a certain more-or-less definite sense and reference."

Lastly, the perlocutionary act¹⁶ is “what we bring about or achieve by saying something, such as convincing, persuading, deterring, and even, say, surprising or misleading” (1975:109). In other words, “saying something will often, or even normally, produce certain consequential effects upon feelings, thoughts, or actions of the audience, or of the speaker, or of other person,” and an act of speech which is performed in this way is termed a perlocutionary act (1975:101). It responds to the speaker’s utterance according to the illocutionary act as the obtained effect of what has been said on the hearer. Austin (1975:101) illustrates the differences between the three linguistic forces as follows:

Act (A) or Locution

He said to me “Shoot her!” meaning by “shoot”, shoot and referring by “her” to her.

Act (B) or Illocution

He urged (or advised, ordered, &c.) me to shoot her.

Act (C.a) or Perlocution

He persuaded me to shoot her.

Act (C.b)

He got me to (or made me &c.) shoot her.

¹⁶ Regarding the perlocutionary act, Austin (1975:101) explains that, “Saying something will often, or even normally, produce certain consequential effects upon the feelings, thoughts, or actions of the audience, or of the speaker, or of other persons: and it may be done with the design, intention, or purpose of producing them; and we may then say, thinking of this, that the speaker has performed an act in the nomenclature of which... to the performance of the locutionary or illocutionary act. We shall call the performance of an act of this kind the performance of a *perlocutionary* act or *perlocution*” (*his italics*).

As we have seen above, the locution act only refers to propositional elements with propositional meaning in a grammar or sentence, while the illocution act¹⁷ is the power of the speaker's utterance to do something to the hearer or cause a particular effect. That is to say, the illocutionary force creates the perlocution act through the hearer's response to the speaker's utterance which for example has the effect of persuading the hearer (B, C). The issue is about what we are doing when saying something and what effect the act of saying something has on the hearer. Here, the crucial point to note is that the perlocutionary act has an effect on the hearer which is achieved by an illocutionary act. Nonetheless, linguistic philosophers for too long have neglected the performative dimension of language and its illocutionary action and force (Austin 1975:1-5). Previous studies largely focus on the propositional element (locution level) or its effect (perlocution level) but not on the illocution which does not describe anything even though an illocution is the performance of an act (Austin 1975:1-5). For Austin, a complete understanding of an utterance should contain all three dimensions, that is, locution, illocution and perlocution between a speaker/text and a hearer/reader. Therefore, this performative language shows how meaning is ultimately produced in the text, how one acts by speaking, and what effect it is expected to have in real life.

¹⁷ Austin (1975:150-151) identifies five kinds of illocutionary actions namely verdictives, exercitives, commissives, behabitives and expositives: (1) The verdictives have to do with the issuing of a verdict (e.g., to estimate, reckon and appraise; (2) the exercitives relate to the exercise of powers, rights and influence (e.g., to appoint, vote, order, urge, advise, and warn; (3) the commissives entail promises that you commit to do something; (4) the behabitives have to do with attitudes and social behaviour (e.g., apologizing, congratulating, commending, condoling, cursing and challenging; and (5) the expositives explain how we use words (e.g., "I reply," "I argue," "I concede," and "I postulate.")

From this perspective, we can distinguish between the meaning of what we say and its force as an illocutionary force within the perlocutionary act (Austin 1975:108). The distinction can create a particular ethical sensitivity to the message of the kingdom proclaimed by Jesus. For example, when Jesus said, “Listen!” and “Let anyone with ears to hear listen!” (Mt 13:18; Mk 4:9; Lk 8:8), Jesus did not just say, “listen” or “listen” in the plain sense of the word. Rather, as Gerhardsson (1968:165-193) argues, the command, “Listen!” (*akouete*) echoes the *Shema* “Hear, O Israel” in Deuteronomy 6:4-5. This indicates that the command to hear, and therefore to obey, which in Deuteronomy 6:4-5 requires hearers to love God with heart and soul and strength, calls for wholehearted response to Jesus (Hooker 2000:89). The utterance does not simply mean that the hearers should hear him but it aims to warn fake believers or those who do not rightly follow God’s will with a sincere heart or have a correct understanding of the Word of God with the intention of doing it (Bruner 1990:495; Perry 1997:47; Snodgrass 2008:152; 2013:286).

Even though the reader of this text already knew on a locution level the meaning of “Listen”, it has no influence any longer on the hearer due to fact that the locution act merely refers to propositional meanings, it has no power to do something to the hearer or cause a particular effect (cf. Searle 1969:31). If the language has an effect on the hearer, the hearer should respond not only on the locution level but also on the illocution level. The living Triune God is still speaking to us through Scripture not just in past stories but also in the present in order to fulfil God’s will and God’s kingdom. This means that the key point in Jesus’ preaching about the kingdom of God is what we should do as Christians (Stassen & Gushee 2003:11-16; Burridge 2007:40-50). Therefore, the illocution act helps us to rethink the meaning of the kingdom and the true response to it.

3.2.2 JR Searle and the speech act theory (the illocutionary action)

Vanhoozer (1998:209) argues that, “If Austin is the Luther of SAT, John Searle may be considered its Melancthon, its systematic theologian.” Although many scholars have studied Austin’s work, Searle has provided by far the most comprehensive account of speech act theory.¹⁸ Searle develops and modifies in his own way aspects of Austin’s work on the performance of an act which is referred to as “speech act theory” (SAT) in his book, *Speech Act: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (1969).

However, Searle points out a problem with Austin’s distinction between the utterance and the illocutionary force, that is, how to separate the illocution from the locution. Searle (1968:148) insists that locutionary and illocutionary acts cannot be separated from each other because no utterance of a sentence and its meaning are completely “force-neutral.” Thus, Searle (1968:155) does not use the term locutionary act; rather, he insists that, “We need to distinguish the illocutionary act from the propositional act – that is, the act of expressing the proposition (a phrase which is neutral as to illocutionary force)... The production of the sentence token under certain conditions is the illocutionary act, and the illocutionary act is the minimal unit of linguistic communication” (Searle 1971:39). In other words, Searle follows Austin’s perspective of the performance of an act as the use of language not in its

¹⁸ Searle’s contributions to the subject matter are highlighted in *Speech Act: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969); *The Philosophy of Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971); *Expression and Meaning: Studies in Theory of Speech Act* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979); *Intentionality: An Essay in the Philosophy of Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); *The Construction of Social Reality* (London: Penguin, 1995); and in conjunction with Daniel Vanderveken, *Foundations of Illocutionary Logic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

“constative” elements but rather as performing an act. This modification is at the core of his theory of speech act as the performative aspect of language. The framework comprises of: (1) utterance acts which means to utter words (morphemes, sentences); (2) propositional acts which refer and predicate; (3) illocutionary acts based on statements, questions, commands, promises, and so on; (4) perlocution acts which seek to persuade, convince, and so on (Searle 1969:24-25).

Searle explains the relationship between the proposition acts and the illocutionary acts in order to distinguish between an assertion and the statement of it as follows:

A proposition is what is asserted in the act of asserting, what is stated in the act of stating... The expression of a proposition is a propositional act, not an illocutionary act... when a proposition is expressed it is always expressed in the performance of an illocutionary act (Searle 1969:29).

Searle’s point above indicates that the propositional acts do not occur alone, for example, one cannot just express a proposition while doing nothing else but having the performed complete action in speech (Searle 1969:29). That is to say, propositional acts show that illocutionary acts are performed simultaneously which means illocutionary acts have propositional content within propositional elements which are not separate from each other. This view of the illocution act in the speech act has been captured as $F(p)$ or $F(RP)$ (Searle 1969:31-32). In “ $F(p)$,” F represents the illocutionary force while p is the proposition, and RP is the term of reference and predication which indicates the non-illocutionary parts of the statement:

The illocutionary force indicator shows how the proposition is to be taken, or to put it another way, what illocutionary force the utterance is to have; that is, what illocutionary act the speaker is performing in the utterance of the sentence... word order, stress, intonation contour, punctuation, the mood of the verb, and the so-called performative verb (Searle 1969:30).

To put this point more precisely, “the general form of (very many kinds of) illocutionary acts is $F(p)$ where the variable “F” takes the illocutionary force indicating devices as values and “ p ” takes expressions of propositions” (Searle 1969:31). Thus, “F” implies both the proposition and illocutionary acts (such as a warning $W(p)$, a promise $Pr(p)$, a blessing; $B(p)$, and so on) which create meaning or meaningful action in accordance with the utterance of a sentence. For example, we can apply “ $F(p)$ ” to 1 Cor. 1:23 which says, “We preach (F) Christ crucified (p).” The statement can be interpreted to mean, “Jesus is Lord (1 Cor 12:3).” From the perspective of Pauline Christology, the statement is neither simply “ p ” nor simply “F” but “ $F(p)$ ” which demonstrates that the expression of a proposition becomes a certain action by illocutionary force and anticipates meaningful deeds in a hearer that fit the utterance of the speaker (see Thiselton 2006a:86).

3.2.2.1 Institutional facts and constitutive rules

Searle proposes a distinction between brute and institutional facts to determine the meaning in the text. In order to explain this, Searle draws on Anscombe’s (1958:69-72) notion of brute fact which refers to the approach of natural science and facts about the physical state of affairs. For example, it is

a brute fact that the sun is ninety-three million miles from the earth and an institutional fact that Clinton is president (Searle 1995:27):¹⁹

Brute facts exist independently of any human institutions; institutional facts can exist only within human institutions. Brute facts require the institution of language in order that we can state the facts, but the brute facts themselves exist quite independently of language or any other institution... institutional facts on the other hand, require special human institutions for their very existence. Language is one such institution (Searle 1995:27).

Thus, meaning is not a brute fact such as the fact that sun is ninety-three million miles from the earth. Meaning cannot be perceived by the physical sciences or state of affairs; rather, it can be recognised in institutional facts which are supported by a system of what Searle calls “constitutive rules.” It governs human behaviour as having a certain form, “X counts as Y in context C” (Searle 1969:35). This shows that the propositional expression implies specific constitutive rules, that is, the certain intent of a community. For example, under the constitutive rules of soccer, when the soccer player kicks a soccer ball into the goal, it counts as one goal. There are conventions involved in these constitutive rules which relate to all kinds of non-linguistic criteria. Therefore, to perform an illocutionary act is to engage in “a rule-governed form of behaviour” (Searle 1979:17). Searle (1969:51) stresses that institutional facts “are indeed facts; but their existence, unlike the existence of ‘brute facts’, presupposes the existence of certain human institutions” (e.g. marriage or the rules of baseball). Thus, “the fact that a man performed a certain speech act, e.g., made a promise, is an institutional fact” (Searle 1969:52). Accordingly, the ethical conception of the kingdom of God is itself

¹⁹ When Searle wrote his book, Clinton was the sitting president of the United States.

“a rule-governed form of behaviour,” for it contains certain “constitutive rules” such as the value system of righteousness in Christian communities. The cultural conventions involved in these constitutive rules are related to all kinds of “institutional facts.” The non-linguistic elements help us to recognise where the illocutionary act operates, and to see that the illocutionary act creates “new realities.” For example, “I divorce you” is an institutional fact that creates a social reality in appropriate circumstances such as the court (Searle 1995:54-55). In this regard, “speaking a language and writing a text are matters of institutional facts and constitutional rules, matters of authors’ intentions and corporate intentions” (Vanhoozer 1998:245). Therefore, we should remember that biblical texts in general relate to institutions with their own sets of constitutive rules. From this perspective, one possible meaning may be that the Christian should be more concerned about textual meaning as an institutional fact in order to find the genuine meaning and response to do it.

3.2.2.2 The direction of fit

The intention in the text/utterance of a statement only enables us to view actions as more than mere nonverbal expression or written document. Searle (1976:4) emphasises the importance of the author’s intention which is being able to find the true meaning that the original author intended in the text, and he calls this the illocutionary point. The speaker’s intention creates illocutionary force which points or purposes to get the hearer to do something. In other words, the illocutionary act has a clearly associated perlocutionary intent (Searle 1979:3). The illocutionary point determines the kind of direction between the propositional element and the world, and it can explain how that content is related to the word as a real, not an abstract idea. Searle

(1979:5) calls this aspect the “direction of fit” and it is always a consequence of the illocutionary point, that is, of how the propositional content matches the world with the illocutionary points. Therefore, the speaker’s purpose pertains to the “direction” (illocutionary point) of the communicative action which creates a new reality in the world by urging the hearer to perform a certain action in accordance with the utterance of the speaker.

In particular, this illocutionary point depends on the illocutionary force in the utterance of the speaker which causes a difference in the direction of fit in language use even though there is the same propositional content. For example, the statements, “I suggest we should study” and “I insist that we should study” have the same the propositional content and illocutionary point, but with varying degrees of strength because each has a different illocutionary force. The illocutionary force is closely linked to what kind of language is used. Thus, Searle (1976:10-16; 1979:10-20) identifies five basic types of speech act $F(p)$ which people perform with language and which are arranged around the organising categories of direction of fit between world and word.²⁰ These are:

(1) Assertives (representatives, e.g. assertions, conjectures, and predictions) which are true or false utterances and have the words-to-world direction of fit;

²⁰ Actually, Searle borrows Austin’s notion of illocutionary verbs, which I have added and harmonized with Austin’s view. For more information on this issue, see JL Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975:8-12).

(2) Directives (e.g. ask, order, command, request, and promise) are utterances which urge the hearer to do something and have the world-to-words direction of fit;

(3) Commissives (similar to directives' point) are utterances which commit one to do something and also have the world-to-words direction of fit;

(4) Expressives (e.g. thanks, complaints, and apologies) which express one's psychological state have no direction of fit because in performing an expressive, the speaker is neither trying to get the world to match the words nor the words to match the world;²¹

(5) Declarations (e.g. appointments, definitions, and condemnations) are utterances which lead to the correspondence between the propositional content and reality. A declaration has the double direction of fit (word to world and world to word):

If we adopt illocutionary point as the basic notion on which to classify uses of language, then there are a rather limited number of basic things we do with language: we tell people how things are, we try to get them to do things, we commit ourselves to doing things, we express our feelings and attitudes and we bring about changes through our utterances. Often, we do more than one of these at once in the same utterance (Searle 1979:29).

²¹ See JR Searle, *Expression and Meaning: Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979:15) which says, "For example, when I apologize for having stepped on your toe, it is not my purpose either to claim that your toe was stepped on nor to get it stepped on... one cannot say: I apologize that I stepped on your toe; rather the correct English is, I apologize for stepping on your toe."

Therefore, the illocutionary act should distinguish between different illocutionary points in language use. The direction of fit like the illocutionary force is closely related to the speaker's intention which determines the direction between words and the world. This shows how the speaker's intention $F(p)$ expressed in the same proposition (p) results in different illocutionary acts F such as a warning $W(p)$, promise $Pr(P)$, blessing $B(p)$, and so on (Searle 1969:31). In order to explain this, Searle (1979:3-4) employs Anscombe's illustration²² of the shopping list of a shopper and detective:

Suppose a man goes to the supermarket with a shopping list given him by his wife on which are written the words "beans, butter, bacon and bread". Suppose as he goes around with his shopping cart selecting these items, he is followed by a detective who writes down everything he takes... in the case of the shopper's list... to get the world to match the words; the man is supposed to make his actions fit the list. In the case of the detective... to make the words match the world; the man is supposed to make the list fit the actions of the shopper. This can be further demonstrated by observing the role of "mistake" in the two cases. If the detective gets home and suddenly realizes that the man bought pork chops instead of bacon, he can simply erase the word "bacon" and write "pork chops". But if the shopper gets home and his wife points out he has bought pork chops when he should have bought bacon he cannot correct the mistake by erasing "bacon" from the list and writing "pork chops."

This illustration shows different illocutionary acts in the direction of fit between words and world. The detective's list has the word-to-world

²² For further explanation of this illustration, see Anscombe (1957).

direction of fit (as do statements, descriptions, assertions, and explanations). On the other hand, the shopper's list has the world-to-word direction of fit (as do requests, commands, vows, and promises) (Searle 1979:4). This view demonstrates that even though both lists have the same propositional content (*p*), their force (*F*) is quite different, and the distinction between the directions of fit is definitely the distinction between different kinds of illocution act according to author's purpose. For example, when Paul writes that "No one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor 12:3), the proposition content "Jesus is Lord" purposes an assertion point which has a word to match the world direction of fit. On the other hand, "Jesus is Lord" is the same as the proposition, "If you confess with your lips that 'Jesus is Lord' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (Rom 10:9). However, its purpose is a promise point which has a world that matches the word's direction of the fit. This illustration clearly shows that the distinction between different directions of fit is precisely the distinction between different types of illocutionary point even though they have the same propositional content.

In this regard, the relationship between the illocutionary act and its direction of fit can be used to develop a Christian ethical theory as an alternative way to act in the world. Since Christian ethics is based on Scripture, interpreting the Bible is crucial to a biblical ethics theory which offers guidelines about how to live and what to do as Christians (Birch & Rasmussen 1976:11-14; Vanhoozer, Bartholomew, Treier & Wright 2005:199-200). For Searle, meaning has to do specifically with the illocutionary act, not the perlocutionary effects or the propositional content. This suggests that the biblical authors spoke about something in order to get their readers to recognise their intention to produce something in the readers which

demonstrates the authors' directionality, that is, the authors' attempt to create a world-to-words direction of fit.

Thus, Christian ethics should be concerned with what the text wants to do in the mind of the reader by its direction of fit. If Christian ethics does not consider this, it would simply be a unidimensional thing from a given passage of propositional content; not a specific meaning in the text but a mere interpretation of the propositional components. It would simply offer a moralistic or dogmatic norm but it cannot prove that the true message in the text has illocutionary force without distorting the intention of the author. In other words, Christian ethics should pay precise attention to the text's direction of fit in order to find its genuine meaning and then act according to the word of God. Thus, it is important to ensure that Christian ethical theories represent $F(p)$ – the illocutionary force F of its propositional elements (p) in line with the Christian way of life based on Scripture's intention.

In order to respond to the biblical direction of fit in Christian ethics, Christians should recognise and accept the biblical writer's purpose as $F(p)$ in order to obey God's intent. In fact, the aim of Christian ethical theory is not simply to obtain information on how to live. Rather, it is to reconstruct the everyday Christian life by doing what we ought to do in accordance with the words of Jesus such as making a promise, issuing a warning or giving an exhortation in order to fulfil God's will and God's kingdom. In this sense, a social ethical approach to the direction of fit reminds us of the relationship between what the Bible said/meant (p) and the world which is the author's

illocutionary force that determines the kind of direction. This dimension is not merely aimed at reconstructing the meanings of Christian ethics in the Scripture of a propositional morality theme, but at doing what the biblical author intended to the public domain ethically i.e., in terms of the presence of God's kingdom and its witness. Accordingly, the relationship between the ethical approach to the text and its praxis from the author's illocutionary force is a matter of following the directions between words and the world. Therefore, the focus provides the essential connection between the biblical world and the direction of the Christian moral dimension which enables one to obey the Bible's teaching as the original biblical author intended in everyday life, not as past stories of Scripture but as a lived reality.

3.3 Summary and Conclusion of Chapter

This chapter has explained the speech act theory based on the works of Austin and Searle in linguistic philosophy which is about the use of language in ordinary life. The theory of linguistic philosophy provides crucial insight in the interpretation of the text, and helps one to grasp its inherent meaning and do something in accordance with the communicative intent in ordinary life situations. The authors suggest five essential themes under SAT. The first is that speaking a language is the performance of an act. Second, this performative utterance can be divided into three aspects namely the locutionary (the performance of an act of saying something), the illocutionary (the performance of an act in saying something), and the perlocutionary act (what we bring about or achieve by saying something). Third, the illocutionary action is the force of what we do in saying something according to the illocutionary point (speaker's purpose) to promise, warn or exhort the hearer. Fourth, SAT operates on principles or constitutive rules

and it is linked to all kinds of institutional facts. Fifth, SAT assumes that a proposition is always represented in the performance of an illocutionary act as $F(p)$ which indicates the direction of fit between words and the world as reality.

From these themes, Christian ethics can find new moral sensibility and specific practical directions by distinguishing between the meaning of what the Bible says (proposition) and the force of what the Bible says (illocution act). Since Christian ethical theory depends on the message of the kingdom proclaimed by Jesus (Chilton 1987:19-31), if we want to know exactly what Christian ethics means or aims to do, first, we should know what the kingdom of God means in the words of Jesus. It is a necessary interpretive operation at the illocution level of the text. However, previous studies on Christian ethics seem to concentrate simply on the propositional content (locution level) in Scripture and its effect as response (perlocutionary level) and not on the illocutionary act. It is not enough to understand and practice ethics based on the presence of the kingdom. In other words, the meaning of what the Bible says (locution) and the response of saying something from the Bible (perlocution) do not amount to the meaning of the text as the original biblical author intended and it also cannot make one do something in accordance with what the text says. According to SAT, only illocution is able to determine meaning and to act in line with the utterance in sayings such as warning $W(p)$, promise $Pr(P)$, blessing $B(p)$, and so on (Searle 1969:31).

In order to rediscover the meaning of the righteous kingdom and its contemporary ethical application, SAT claims that the use of language is

explained by certain constitutive rules that govern human behaviour (Searle 1971:40). Propositional content can be understood as having certain “constitutive rules,” which constitute and regulate activities, and often have the form, “X counts as Y in context C” (Searle 1969:35). Conventions are involved in these constitutive rules which relate to all kinds of non-linguistic criteria. Hence, to perform illocutionary acts is to engage in “a rule-governed form of behaviour” which presupposes the existence of certain human institutions (e.g. marriage or the rules of baseball) (Searle 1969:51; 1979:17). In this sense, moral sensibilities are about what is right and wrong and these relate to what we should do and what kinds of human institutions and practices are necessary to support the shared life that we live. This viewpoint can go beyond the mere identification of already existing patterns of behaviour and create new identity and lifestyles as well as discover ways of improving the present human condition. Therefore, we are reminded of the meaning of the righteous kingdom and its life of righteousness as Christians in everyday life, and the approach points to what will be, what can be, and what ought to be.

In fact, the ethical conception of the kingdom of God is itself “a rule-governed form of behaviour,” for it contains certain “constitutive rules” such as the value system of righteousness in Christianity’s social context. This is closely linked to the communities’ confession which produces a particular identity that tells us who we are in society as well as who God is as we identify God’s illocutionary force in human history. All ethical reflection occurs relative to a particular time and place; the very nature and structure of ethics is determined by the particularities of a community’s history and convictions (Hauerwas 1983:1). The cultural conventions involved in these constitutive rules are related to all kinds of “institutional facts.” The non-linguistic elements help us to recognise where the illocutionary act operates

and to see that the illocutionary act creates “new realities.” How does the believing congregation then discover the true moral kingdom from Jesus’ message in a more practical way and in terms of the ethical issue from the perspective of SAT? How does the message of the kingdom continue to influence Christian community and the world as the living word of God and a reality in our lives?

To answer these questions, the three questions below would also help to refine ethical exegesis in the SAT:²³

(1) Which constitutive rules and institutional facts govern this biblical passage?

(2) What kind of illocutionary force $F(p)$ does this biblical passage perform?

(3) How does the illocutionary force $F(p)$ in the text determine the kind of direction of fit that could build up the people of God in and for the world in order to fulfil the kingdom of God as an alternative reality?

These questions offer an interpretative methodology as well as insight on how Christian ethics should be understood in the context of the kingdom. The distinction will show a framework with different ethical dimensions

²³ I have used and revised Duck-Hyun Kim’s hermeneutical questions and the insight from the perspective of SAT in his Ph.D thesis to support my argument. See Duck-Hyun Kim, “*The Homiletical Appropriation of Biblical Passages in the Light of Speech Act Theory: Preaching as a Performance of the Biblical Text*” (Stellenbosch University Ph. D Thesis, 2014:89).

regarding Matthew 25:1-13, the Parable of the Ten Virgins²⁴ as explained below:

(1) Which constitutive rules and institutional facts govern this biblical passage?

The Parable of the Ten Virgins in Matthew 25:1-13 shows the different cultural forms between an ancient and a modern wedding ceremony. In the ancient world, the betrothal ceremony typically took place in the house of the bride's father, after which the young woman remained in her father's house for several years. When the wedding day came, the bride was adorned and then taken in a festive procession to the groom's house at night, escorted with lanterns. The groom would then go out to receive the bride and bring her into his home to a celebration that could last as long as seven days. It was understood that the groom was bringing his bride back to his house after observing a banquet at the home of the bride; therefore virgins waited at the home of the groom.²⁵ However, in this text, it is not certain where the feast took place or what exactly is being described, and the text does not talk about the bride and groom in detail even though it is about a wedding feast. The silence in the text however raises the question, what does the term virgin mean? What should a virgin do at a wedding ceremony?²⁶ These constitutive

²⁴ I have selected the Parable of the Ten Virgins because it serves as a good illustration of the main argument of this thesis. The parable is useful for ethical application and it illustrates the religious linguistic characteristics of the kingdom of God in the light of the SAT.

²⁵ For further information on this issue, see KR Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent: A Comprehensive Guide to the Parables of Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2008:510).

²⁶ According to Senior (1998:274), the term virgin in the Greek is *parthenoi*: "The NRSV translation 'bridesmaids' is not literal and assumes they are part of the bride's party. If the setting is the groom's house, they may be associated with his household or family. In any case, they are part of the wedding celebration and are to meet the groom with lighted lamps when he returns." However, Alford (1980:248) points out that the Bible relates the Parable of the Wedding Feast in Matthew 22:1-14 and the Parable of the Virgins in Matthew 25. He notes that, "In both of the wedding parables the bride does not appear – for she, being the Church, is in fact the aggregate of the guests in the one case, and of the companions in the other." Similarly, Lange (1978:248) notes that, "The virgins are not merely companions of the bride, but representatives of the bride, the Church... The

rules and institutional facts would help Christian ethics to recognise the identity and essence of the illocutionary act in the passage in order to find its true meaning without distortion and help one to act as a Christian.

(2) What kind of illocutionary force $F(p)$ does this biblical passage perform?

In this parable, while the foolish virgins went to buy oil, the bridegroom came and the wise virgins went in with him into wedding feast, but the others did not return until the door was shut. On returning, they asked the bridegroom to “open the door,” but he did not. Rather, he said, “Truly I tell you, I do not know you. Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.” (Mt 25:11-13).²⁷ This utterance indicates the speaker’s situation or identity and the specific intention which can be represented by the proposition (p) constituting an illocutionary force point F such as exhortation “ $E(p)$.” In the Bible, the words of exhortation or warning contain the directive word which alludes to a way of speaking of the end of time as stated in the phrase “the day or the hour” in the text above.²⁸ From it comes

Church, in her aggregate and ideal unity, is the bride; the members of the Church, as individually called, are guests; in their separation from the world, and expectation of the Lord’s coming, they are His virgins.” Davies and Allison (1988:394-400) argue that, “Matthew already knew the tradition which depicted the church as a virgin or a group of virgins.” Furthermore, in Matthew 13:25, the response, “Lord, Lord”, suggests that the foolish virgins belong to the Christian community. In other words, the virgins represent the bride and the Church, that is, the believing community. I support the views above (rather than Senior’s argument) that these messages about the kingdom of God in Jesus’ teaching and preaching are actualised only within the Christian community. Jesus’ parables about the kingdom were meant for only His disciples and not those on the outside (Mt 13:10-17, Mk 4:10-12 and Lk 8:9-10), which demonstrates that the words of Jesus constitute institutional facts having divine power to establish patterns of behaviour for everyday life only within the Christian community.

²⁷ For Hagner (1995:730), “the point here is not the avoidance of literal sleep (creating an unnecessary tension with the preceding verses – the wise virgins did sleep) but spiritual wakefulness, that is, keeping oneself in a state of constant readiness for the coming of the son of Man (cf. Matthew 24:42-43).”

²⁸ Most scholars (Davies & Allison 1988:392; Senior 1998:275-276; France 2000:177-183) argue that the statement, “Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour (Matthew 25:13),” is used metaphorically to prepare the believer in thoughtful readiness for the certain but unknown hour of the *Parousia*. Moreover, Matthew had already earlier identified Jesus as the ‘bridegroom’ in a Gospel passage with strong eschatological tones (see Matthew 9:15). Thus, Hagner (1995:727) points out that, “Matthew continues to address the importance of readiness for the coming of the Son of Man. The coming of the bridegroom and the

the designation “eschatological,” which is necessary for the action of preparing for the end of time in the present life (Campbell 2000:39). In other words, this illocutionary force creates different responses of fear, regret or hope in the hearer. In this sense, therefore, the “E(*p*)” asks for preparing the end of time to the hearer or a Christian community and it represents a Christological message as Jesus is the hidden bridegroom in the Parable of the Ten Virgins (cf. France 2000:181).

(3) How does the illocutionary force point F(*p*) in the text determine the kind of direction of fit that would build up the people of God in and for the world in order to fulfil the kingdom of God as an alternative reality?

Generally, this parable is about the watchfulness, readiness, and faithfulness of the believers regarding the day or the hour of the Lord as a language of *exhortation* (Kümmel 1957:54-59; Marshall 1963:40-43; Gundry 1994:500-502). In terms of SAT, the illocutionary force “E(*p*)” serves as the direction of fit and refers to doing something which directs the passage to the hearer/reader between the propositional content and illocutionary force as a specific action which has a world to match the words. This view pertains to the illocutionary effect or response in the text which creates the perlocutionary effect. Thus, Christian ethics should pay attention to the direction of fit in order to act rightly in terms of the utterance of statements. The parable does not just remind us of the need for watchfulness, readiness, and faithfulness in view of the day of the Lord, it also urges us to do something to fulfil God’s will and God’s kingdom in daily life (Henry 1961:372). Members of Christian congregations long for God’s complete sovereignty in Jesus Christ (Moltmann 1967:15-16) that would enable them to participate not just as spectators but as active participants in the world. In

wedding banquet have messianic associations (cf. Matthew 22:1-14), which make the parable particularly effective.”

this regard, Christian ethics can find its identity in the direction of fit. This point implies that the believer should live the everyday life in line with their true Christian identity and in faith in the language of exhortation such as “Keep awake.” Therefore, the illocutionary force *F* such as exhortation “*E(p)*” relates to the implications of the kingdom of God for moral human action.²⁹

To sum up, Christian ethics should be a performative action based on the message of the kingdom in the utterances of Jesus. In order to respond to this, an interpretive operation is required in which the illocutionary force is expressed as a perlocutionary response to do something in accordance with the author’s intent. The goal of the analysis is not to replicate or retell the stories of early Christian communities, but to transform or perform them by the illocutionary force to fit the words and world in contemporary life. Therefore, Christian ethical theory should be interpreted in the context of the kingdom in which the illocution level finds its genuine meaning and helps one to act properly as a Christian in everyday life in light of the kingdom of God. In the next chapter, we will explore how these hermeneutical methods based on illocutionary force point can help reintroduce the presence of the kingdom of God in light of the threefold locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts and also focus on the notion of moral direction and its applications.

²⁹ Senior (1998:274) shows that a few rabbinic texts refer to “oil” as symbolic of good deeds (e.g., *Num. Rab.* 13:15-16) and that the Parable of the Ten Virgins emphasizes doing good deeds as a way of preparing for the end time. Hare (1993:284-285) also affirms that Matthew presents the oil as a symbol of good works while Luther believes that the oil represents faith.

CHAPTER 4

THE RELIGIOUS LINGUISTIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PRESENCE OF THE KINGDOM AS GOD'S MIGHTY DIVINE SPEECH ACT³⁰: A CHRISTIAN ETHICAL APPLICATION

4.1 Chapter Introduction

The previous chapter has explored in the light of SAT an alternative linguistic epistemology for moral performance in the context of the kingdom of God. It shows that SAT seeks to uncover what the text of the kingdom meant or means, how the text can be considered performative to the reader because of its divine force, and what the text creates by saying something to the reader. This view bridges the gap between Scripture and its praxis as a hermeneutical tool and provides for the reconceptualization of the methodology of Christian ethics based on the Bible and not on the principle of the world, but rather, on the living voice of God expressed in the utterances of Jesus.

Thus, the words of Jesus should be the pattern for Christian action or the norm for Christian living, and his identity should govern the realistic content of the ethics of God's kingdom. Christian ethical theory must ask: how do we

³⁰ Divine speech act or divine discourse is a technical term in speech act theory which refers to God's speech act (cf. Wolterstorff 1995:19).

explain the relationship between the presence of the kingdom which is God's reign and Christian ethics in a way that would dissolve the tension between the past, present and future in the message of the kingdom as proclaimed by Jesus? How do we discern the genuine moral kingdom in the sayings of Jesus in a more practical manner?

In order to answer these questions, Christian ethical theories must perceive the message of the kingdom in the utterances of Jesus as God's total speech act and take into account the illocutionary acts $F(p)$ in Scripture such as acts of blessing, promising, warning, exhorting, and so forth. These do not indicate merely moral lessons or doctrines in the propositional elements (p) of the text but specific ways of doing something as a dynamic application of the pattern of Christian life embedded in the mighty divine force $F(p)$ of the text. In fact, an approach to Scripture seeks to show how biblical language participates in the Word of God since the Bible is identified as the Word of God (Vanhoozer 1994:144). This demonstrates that the doctrine of Scripture concerns the manner of God's involvement in the words of Scripture and thus the manner of God's activity in the world (Vanhoozer 1994:146). This perspective is essential in explaining the presence of God, the important role of the Holy Spirit as a mighty divine speech act and its applications in the modern world. Therefore, this chapter will consider how the application of SAT can help to develop a theological resonance in Christian ethics. It depends on the living voice of God and part of God's total speech act as the presence of kingdom in the present. This hermeneutic and ethical consideration will offer both constraints and guidance for Christian ethical theory through God's illocutionary force which naturally enables a proper response on the part of Christians in order to achieve God's will and God's kingdom in our place.

4.2 The Presence of the Kingdom in the Past, Present and Future and Its Moral Reflection according to SAT

In a general sense, the phrase the “kingdom of heaven” or the “kingdom of God” refers to God’s reign, as it points essentially and directly to God’s self (Jeremias 1971:9-14; Ladd 1974:64, 81; Kingsbury 1975:134; France 2007:271). This shows that the main point of a Bible story is to show that God and God’s saving acts in human history have divine power (Ladd 1974:25-71; Vanhoozer, Bartholomew, Treier & Wright 2005:826). The kingdom is seen as a divine invasion and a divine incursion (Jones 1940:64; Henry 1992:42). As Ladd (1974:71) points out, the dynamic power of the kingdom has invaded the world, and human beings are to respond in a radical way. In this regard, the kingdom of God implies God’s sovereignty, and it is closely linked to the salvation of God’s people. It is also expected to do something to God’s people in response to the Word of God since the kingdom is an expression of God’s self through the words of Jesus. Therefore, God’s word, that is, the kingdom, is something that God says, something that God does, and something that God is.

In fact, the Bible presents God as the speaker who takes the form of speech such as promising, warning, commanding and so on in order to reveal God’s self to God’s people or fulfill God’s will and God’s kingdom in God’s people. Vanhoozer (1998:205) confirms that, “The God of the Christian Scriptures is a God who relates to human beings largely through verbal communication,” which means “the word is God’s-being-in-communicative-action” (Vanhoozer 2002:162). In other words, the presence of the kingdom can be understood

according to linguistic characteristics.³¹ Vanhoozer argues (1998:205-207) that a “design plan” for language is to enable communication and understanding, which like the mind, another divine endowment, was designed by God to be used in certain ways. It encourages us to think of communication in terms of intentional action. Therefore, “*the design plan of language is to serve as the medium of covenantal relations with God, with others, with words*” (Vanhoozer 1998:206, *his italics*).

In this sense, the kingdom of God is regarded as God’s Word in verbal communication that would establish a covenant between God and God’s people for the establishment of God’s kingdom. An “utterance of ‘I promise to do A’ will place him under an obligation to do A” (Davis 1994:216). Searle (1969:58, 60) maintains that the statements “‘I promise’ and ‘I hereby promise’ are among the strongest illocutionary force indicating devices for *commitment* and also the essential feature of a promise is that it is the undertaking of an obligation to perform a certain act” (*his italics*). Strictly speaking, communication does not merely refer to the propositional theme in the utterance or text between the speaker/text and the hearer/reader, but rather to the performance of the action in the force of what the speaker/text said, which brings about some response in accordance with the speaker’s intent towards the hearer. Thus, it is an obvious fact that the kingdom of God is the living voice of God and part of God’s mighty divine speech act, and it can have perlocutionary effects on the believers.

³¹ Vanhoozer (1998:205) emphasizes that humans have the capacity to communicate and to understand God’s words as beings created in God’s image. He writes: “The Old Testament shows how the fate of individuals and nations depends on the way in which persons respond to God’s message that comes through the Law and the Prophets. The underlying presupposition of the story of Israel, and the story of humanity as a whole, is that humans are able to understand the word of God and words in general. The New Testament goes further: it pictures language (e.g., parables, preaching) as having the power to transform people’s lives.”

How then do we explain the presence of the kingdom and its moral dimensions from the linguistic characteristics? How do we explain the words of God as divine force in the tension between the past, the present and the future in the kingdom? If the word of God (Jesus Christ, the Word who was made flesh, according to John 1:14) is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb 13:8), the influence of the Word of God would be same in time and space. If this is so, is it reasonable to classify the kingdom into the past, the present and the future, and to probe what its impact is on the believer?

The kingdom refers to God's self – God's sovereignty – which means the presence of God and the story of the salvation of God's people. The presence of God is not confined merely to its current state, but rather it goes beyond time and place (the past, present, and future) like the Trinitarian God (Dalferth 2006:83-85). If the God of salvation means access to heaven for believers, what then is the difference between God and the god of Gnosticism?³² The God of Christianity is interested in the world and intervenes in the lives of human beings directly and actively (cf. Rowe & Trakakis 2007:26). Jeremiah 33:2-3 says, "Thus says the LORD who made the earth, the LORD who formed it to establish it—the LORD is his name: Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known." As the Exodus story shows, God is involved in the life of God's people. God heard the voice of the suffering of the people of Israel and initiated the exodus of the Israelites in order to redeem them physically and spiritually and save them. God also clothed and fed them in the wilderness

³² Gnosticism does not pay attention to the restoration and salvation of the whole individual in everyday life but to the restoration of the divine in the afterlife (cf. Jonas 1963:194-197).

for forty years. This demonstrates that God desires the salvation of the human spirit, soul and body. God's kingdom includes both the unseen world of righteousness, peace, and joy (the spirit world) and the tangible world that we live in (the physical world). God lives our lives with us and brings true resurrection through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. In other words, the Trinitarian God works as the past, present, and future of the kingdom in human history.

From the SAT perspective, the presence of the kingdom can be seen from a threefold level of the locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts in terms of the essence of the totality of the kingdom of God in the past (locution level), the present (illocutionary level) and the future (perlocutionary level).

First, the kingdom of God in the past can be regarded at the locution level. The locutionary act is the performance of an act of saying something which presents itself at the level of saying something as a propositional element. This refers to the content of what has been said or what has been written in relation to the past. In other words, the kingdom of God in the past shows that God has spoken to God's people by God's son (Heb 1:1-2), and it is closely linked to God the Father's locution. The words are the authorized words of the Father in Scripture (Vanhoozer 1997:156). The utterance, the propositional dimension, contains the information to be communicated between God and the believer for God's kingdom. The locution act of the kingdom points to the propositional elements and the propositional meaning in what God said or what the text meant.

Second, the kingdom of God in the present can be seen at the illocutionary level. The illocutionary act is what we do in saying something through the inherent linguistic force as opposed to the locutionary act, which is able to recognize the true meaning of the text or utterance. It functions as the power of what we do when we utter words which pertain to our current situation and which can only take place within a conventional rule. To put this point more precisely, the illocutionary act relates to what one does in saying in accordance with the speaker's specific intent to promise, warn or exhort the hearer to act in a certain way. It is what makes a communication count as a certain kind of action which is able to create a new reality in a particular community. Searle (1971:39) argues that, "The production of the sentence token under certain conditions is the illocutionary act, and the illocutionary act is the minimal unit of linguistic communication."

The Bible shows that God does testify to Christ in various ways (Vanhoozer 1997:156), and the testimony has illocutionary force, as it continues to play across time, here and there (Pratt 1977:136). This characteristic of the illocution portrays the kingdom in the present as having divine force in contemporary life and it is related to Jesus' works through a particular intent or force which shows that a proposition (the word of God as the kingdom in the past) is to be taken (cf. Vanhoozer 1994:177). It is neither simply "*p*" nor simply "*F*" but "*F(p)*" which demonstrates that the expressions of the propositions in the context of the kingdom (the kingdom in the past as the Word of God) become a certain action (the kingdom in the present as the force of what we do with the Word of God) through the illocutionary force. It is expected to produce meaningful deeds in a hearer according to God's intent. For example, in 1 Corinthians 1:23, the statement, "We preach (*F*) Christ

crucified (*p*),” can be interpreted as “Jesus is Lord” $F(p)$ (1 Cor 12:3; cf. Thiselton 2006a:86). That is to say, the kingdom in the present indicates the force of what we do in accordance with God’s purpose which creates meaning or meaningful action from the utterance of a statement. Therefore, the intent of God in the language act concerned is communicated in the form of an intentional act as the kingdom in the present under the illocutionary act.

Third, the kingdom of God in the future can be represented at the perlocutionary level. The perlocutionary act is “what we bring about or achieve by saying something.” It produces the intended effect of what has been said. Austin (1975:101) states that, “Saying something will often, or even normally, produce certain consequential effects upon feelings, thoughts, or actions of the audience, or of the speaker, or of other person,” and an act of speech which is performed in this way is termed a perlocutionary act. It responds to the speaker’s utterance according to the illocutionary act as the obtained effect of what has been said on the hearer. The perlocutionary act produces an effect on the hearer achieved through an illocutionary act; the illocutionary force creates an appropriate response in the receiver. This idea of perlocution can be used to express the kingdom in the future as what happens as a result of speaking (the kingdom in the future as the response or effect of the sayings of the God) to persuade, frighten, or alarm the believer, and it corresponds to the Holy Spirit’s response as God’s perlocution (cf. Vanhoozer 1997:156). For example, when Jesus says, “Listen!” and “Let anyone who has ears, listen!” (Mt 13:18, Mk 4:9, Lk 8:8), Jesus does not just direct the people to “listen”.³³ He is not simply asking them to hear him, but rather trying to warn fake believers, those do not follow God’s will or obey

³³ Gerhardsson (1968:165-193) argues, the command, “Listen!” (*akouete*) echoes the *Shema* “Hear, O Israel” in Deuteronomy 6:4-5. This indicates that the command to hear, and therefore to obey, which in Deuteronomy 6:4-

him with a sincere heart and true understanding of the Word of God, by urging or persuading them to obey the Word (Bruner 1990:495; Perry 1997:47; Snodgrass 2008:152; 2013:286). Thus, the kingdom in the future as a perlocutionary act responds to the intended effect of what has been said. It has to do with the believers' response.

Thus, the Bible is the Word of God which reveals God's self and presents God's kingdom. The Word of God is the result of God's self-communicative action with God's people. It shows God's being in a speech act which is not simply speaking a language but engaging in a performative action which is expressed as the kingdom in the past, the present, and the future.

From the perspective of SAT, this threefold character of the kingdom corresponds to the locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts respectively. This consideration also connects with the doctrine of the Trinity, and how it relates to our lives through the divine force in the verbal communication between God and God's people. The locutionary act of the kingdom refers to what God said while the illocutionary act of the kingdom has content (reference and predication which indicate the non-illocutionary parts of the statement) and a certain intention (cf. Searle 1969:31-32). The illocutionary act is able to produce an effect on the Christian in accordance with the utterance of God, but the perlocutionary act of the kingdom is the effect an illocutionary act has on the actions of the believer. For example,

5 requires hearers to love God with heart and soul and strength, calls for wholehearted response to Jesus (Hooker 2000:89).

when Jesus said, “Listen” (Mt 13:18, Mk 4:9, Lk 8:8), he was issuing a *warning* (illocution) to *persuade* the believer (perlocution), which clearly shows that the work of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God affects the lives of Christians in practical ways.

In other words, Jesus’s intentional act becomes a significant guide for patterning Christian life, that is, for Christian ethics. In SAT, the sayings of Jesus would be considered an illocutionary act and part of the total speech act, which can have a perlocutionary effect. These sayings are still valid, having a unique illocutionary act and a perlocution response, and they also require us to do something in response as believers with responsibilities. This performative aspect of language (the kingdom) refers to the mystery of divine action which reveals the truth of God’s Word in Christians lives. Stated differently, Jesus’ proclamation of the presence of the kingdom opens up a new reality within us as a pattern for Christian living. Therefore, Christian ethical theories should pay attention to the illocutionary force according to its perlocutionary effect in order to fulfil God’s will and God’s kingdom.

4.3 Revisiting the Ethical Approach to the Presence of the Kingdom as Messianic Language according to SAT

The presence of the kingdom (the words of God) refers to God’s self, and it is clearly linked to God’s intent (force) which shows God’s redemptive work through the messianic language in the Bible; that is, it shows why God reveals God’s self to God’s people and the purpose of the kingdom of God. The kingdom has to do with the great divine work of salvation in Jesus Christ

(Ridderbos 1962:354; Hunsberger 2015:62-63) and, Jesus is the saviour who makes God's sovereignty and the kingdom of God a reality (Brunner 1962:365-366; Snyder 1991:147-149). Furthermore, the kingdom is the redemptive reign of God as *messianic salvation* and it is realized in human history in terms of the blessings of God's sovereignty (Elwell 2001:658). Ladd's (1974:72, 91) remark in this regard is noteworthy:

When we ask about the content of this new realm of blessing, we discover that *basileia* means not only the dynamic reign of God and the realm of salvation; it is also used to designate the gift of life and salvation. Here is another original element in Jesus' teaching. The kingdom of God stands as a comprehensive term for all that the *messianic salvation* included... our central thesis is that the kingdom of God is the redemptive reign of God dynamically active to establish his rule among men [*sic*], and that this kingdom, which will appear as an apocalyptic act at the end of the age, has already come into human history in the person and mission of Jesus to overcome evil, to deliver men [*sic*] from its power, and to bring them into the blessings of God's reign (*my emphasis*).

As we have seen above, the purpose of the kingdom of God is the salvation of God's people, and the utterances of Jesus can be understood as the messianic language which counts as illocutionary force in SAT for the messianic acts. This shows that the propositional meaning of the kingdom becomes a reality as the presence of the kingdom in the present through the inherent language force and according to God's specific intent. Thus, salvation is expressed as messianic force. A particular view of language in biblical writing demonstrates how words relate to things or objects and how words influence the world and refer to the essential identity between the word and what it meant. For example, in Hebrew, the noun "*dabar*" means both "word" and "thing" (Barr, 1961:129-140) which actually distinguishes between thought

and action. It pertains to what lies behind the utterance of a sentence namely the word of power emanating from the unique position of the speaker. The Scripture confirms that, “The Word of God is living and active” (Heb 4:12); and “So shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it” (Isa 55:11). Defining the word of power, Thiselton (1974:290) notes that, “the word is a unit of energy charged with power which flies like a bullet to its billet.” In this regard, the sayings of Jesus and his teaching should be seen as performing actions with divine messianic force to execute His messianic purpose for the believers in everyday life.

In fact, Jesus’ messianic intention leads to the illocutionary act and the illocutionary act in Jesus’ sayings can be ascribed to his identity and specific state of affairs regarding God’s kingdom. For example, the interpreter of the statement, “Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour” (Mt 25:13), should regard the total speech act as a divine messianic force. It includes the meaning of what Jesus said (locutionary act), the force of what Jesus said (illocutionary act), and the response of saying something (perlocutionary act) which refers to the identity of Jesus as the bridegroom of his people (cf. France 2000:181). This perspective would help us to recognize the divine illocutionary force in the utterance of Jesus according to the His messianic purpose under God’s sovereignty which indicates Jesus’ specific state of affairs. Thus, Jesus’ sayings, as messianic language, have illocutionary force to accomplish the purpose of salvation. The utterance of Jesus is a past event but its illocutionary force or energy and its intention are continuously being echoed in the present. Therefore, the identity of Jesus should “govern interpretation of conventional ‘messianic’ language, rather than that ready-made assumptions about the meaning of such language should govern an understanding of Jesus” (Thiselton 2006a:80).

From the perspective of the SAT, we can understand the nature of God as revealed in the Bible through the divine illocutionary force. The perspective enables us also to ask what it means to be human and to know that who we are in Jesus Christ precedes what we ought to do before God; that is why the identity of Scripture as God's Word deeply relates to our ability to submit to its authority (Edwards & Stott 1988:104). Furthermore Barr (1973:121) argues that it is important to understand "a communication or revelation from God which is antecedent to the human tradition about him and which then goes on to generate that very tradition." To put it differently, the illocutionary force in the utterance of Jesus creates its intended perlocutionary effect in the believing community as a response to the words of Jesus. In this way, we can stress the point of Jesus' intention in the appropriation of Christian ethics. In other words, the meaning of what the Bible says (locution) and the response of saying something from the Bible (perlocution) cannot cause one to do something in accordance with what the text says. Rather, only illocution is able to determine meaning and to act in line with the utterance in sayings such as promise $Pr(P)$, warning $W(p)$, blessing $B(p)$, and so on (Searle 1969:31).

The force of an illocutionary action as messianic language in the utterance of Jesus is closely linked to the promise or command from God to God's people in order to fulfil the kingdom which is often represented as eschatology.³⁴

³⁴ Thiselton (2007:545) argues that eschatology especially underlines the divine promise which God fulfils through God's own sovereign choice.

The character of the language shows that the promissory language transforms the world of reality:

Some illocutions have part of their purpose or point, to “get the words” (more strictly, their propositional content) to match the world. This is the case with assertions. But others have the inverse function: “to get the world to match the words”. This is the case with promise and commands (Thiselton 1992:294).

The illocutionary force still influences believers today (perlocutionary effect), as it matches the world to the words in terms of the messianic point as promissory language. It concretises the particular identity of Christians in accordance with the illocutionary force in Jesus’ sayings which is represented as Christian communal conviction, confession, or creed and which is based on Jesus’ messianic intention in practical ways. The illocutionary force demonstrates who we are in the Christian community as well as who God is as we identify God’s illocutionary force in human history. All ethical reflection occurs relative to a particular time and place; and the very nature and structure of ethics is determined by the particularities of a community’s history and convictions (Hauerwas 1983:1). Therefore, it is important to show how the illocutionary force influences the Christian life according to its perlocutionary effect.

In the light of SAT, these perspectives depend on constitutive rules and they enable us to create or define new forms of behaviour which often have the form “X counts as Y” or “X counts as Y in context C” (Searle 1969:33-35). For example, under the constitutive rules of soccer, when the soccer player kicks a soccer ball into the goal, it counts as one goal. There are conventions

involved in these constitutive rules, which relate to all kinds of non-linguistic criteria. Therefore, to perform an illocutionary act is to engage in “a rule-governed form of behaviour” (Searle 1979:17). In the Bible, for instance, the statement, “Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour” (Mt 25:13) can be expressed as “*A believer counts as a watchful person in the context of the kingdom of exhortation.*” Similarly, the first Beatitude can be expressed as “*the poor in spirit counts as having the kingdom of heaven in the context of the promises of God’s blessing*”. These utterances perform a speech act of implied behaviour or commitment that is determined by speech. They refer to what we ought to do or how we ought to live in the present from the perspective of the kingdom. They define the pattern of Christian life based on the living voice of God as God’s illocutionary divine force. The concept of promise or exhortation provides the broader role of institutional facts that serve as a foundation for valid illocutionary acts in order to fulfil God’s kingdom. These contain specific conditions through which a speaker takes on certain responsibilities (Searle 1969:62). Specifically, the performative force depends on a situation in which one’s linguistic act “counts as” what sets the illocution in force (Searle 1969:65). Therefore, the message of the kingdom in Jesus is itself *a rule-governed form of behaviour in Christianity’s social context*, but it also transforms situations to fit the eschatological blessing of promise, that is, the divine messianic force according to its perlocutionary effect, which is primary and life-changing.

4.4. The Presence of the Kingdom as Divine Discourse of the Covenant and Its Moral Effects according to SAT³⁵

The presence of the kingdom represents the Word of God; it can be expressed as divine discourse. Generally, divine speech is regarded as divine revelation (Mackey 2000:287). For Barth (1936:162), divine discourse is God in revelatory action, and revelation means the unveiling of what is veiled

³⁵ I have selected Wolterstorff's notion of divine discourse because it serves as a good conceptual resource for the main argument of this thesis. It shows how speech act philosophy might strengthen an understanding of the performance of the ethics of kingdom with which to engage the divine discourse in biblical passages, which can be understood not as God's revelation but rather as a Divine speech act. According to Vanhoozer, (2002:163) Wolterstorff's concept of divine discourse is philosophically necessary in biblical interpretation and also necessary as a theological concept. In Wolterstorff's book, *Divine Discourse: Philosophical Reflection on the Claim that God Speaks* (New York: Cambridge University, 1995), his method is based on speech act theory following the work of JL Austin. This book's main aim is to discover "how to go about reading a text to find out what God might have said or be saying with that text" (Wolterstorff 1995:38). This entails the idea that God is a participant in human discourse. Similarly, Alston (1985:5-20) argues that to understand God's action or the Word of God in the Bible, one must conceptually elaborate the manner in which God enters into interpersonal communication with human beings. This is contrary to the claims of Barth (1936:140-141) who resists conceding that human speech may be appropriated for divine discourse: "As readers of Scripture and hearers of proclamation we can and must, of course, work with certain general conceptual materials, apparently repeating or anticipating what God has said to this or that man... But in doing so we have always to bear in mind that these materials are our own work and are not to be confused with the concrete fullness of the Word of God itself which we recall and for which we wait, but only point to it. What God said and what God will say is always quite different from what we can and must say to ourselves and others about its content. Not only the word of preaching... but even the word of Scripture through which God speaks to us becomes in fact quite different when it passes from God's lips to our ears and our lips." If the Bible is seen as a divine discourse in normative words, an account needs to be offered of how the words of the Bible are to be read if we want to discern what God says with them. Thus, Wolterstorff (1995:132) suggests "authorial-discourse" interpretation for it. In this sense, Wolterstorff (1995:130-170) is opposed to the textual-sense interpretation defended by Paul Ricoeur, as well as to the performance-interpretation elaborated in rather different ways by Jacques Derrida. In addition, if God speaks to us through the Bible, then God is performing certain illocutionary acts such as promising, warning, and exhorting, and therefore reading or interpreting the Bible means finding out what God means in saying what he says. This entails "testimonial knowledge" which is knowledge gained from the spoken or written word; it indicates that Logos has communicated himself in human language as God's own speech (Wahlberg 2004:1-19).

(1936:118-119). However, Wolterstorff (1995:10) opposes Barth's view and argues that, "divine speech disappeared into divine revelation because speaking of God speaking was taken to be a metaphorical way of attributing revelation to God." Wolterstorff (1995:19) insists that divine discourse is not revelation, but rather, a speech act, and it totally differs from divine revelation:

If we assume that illocutionary actions, such as asserting, commanding, promising, and asking, are a species of revelation, they will elude our grasp. It's true that in promising someone something, one reveals various things about oneself. But *the promising does not itself consist of revealing something – does not itself consist of making the unknown known (my emphasis).*

Furthermore, Wolterstorff (1997:29) supports the assumption that God not only reveals but also speaks. However, he argues that we should not identify speaking with revealing:

Take promising, for example. Suppose you wanted to analyze promising as a species of revealing; how would your analysis go? Presumably you would suggest that to promise to do something is to reveal that you intend to do it. But it is easy to see that that suggestion will not do. You can promise to do something without revealing that you intend to do it, because, for example, you do not intend to do it and so cannot reveal that you do. People do that sort of thing all the time. And conversely, you can reveal that you intend to do something without promising to do it; you may not want to bind yourself in the way that promising binds one.

As we have seen earlier, biblical language demonstrates a particular divine purpose such as promise, warning, and exhortation all of which do something to the believer in accordance with God's Word. Each form of biblical language does not just give instructive information about God but unveils what is veiled. In other words, Scripture does not only refer to the propositional dimensions of truth or falsehood (e.g. God is one), but also to performative acts such as obedience or disobedience. For example, the statement "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 5:3), as in the other verses of the Beatitudes, describes a promise of eschatological blessings and expectations of the future consummation. It also specifies what to do in ordinary life according to the Word of God in order to attain those future blessings.

Another example is in Mark 12:28-31 where one of the scribes asked Jesus, "Which commandment is the first of all?" Jesus answered, "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." This passage does not merely indicate the propositional content, "God is one" or "monotheism", but it also exhorts one to love God with all the heart and with all the understanding, and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbour as oneself. This saying of Jesus is neither simply p nor simply F but $F(p)$. Specifically, it entails a particular divine purpose which enables the hearer to do something according to the inherent linguistic force. That is to say, the utterance of Jesus can be represented as $F(p)$ where " F " is the illocutionary force (Jesus' specific intent) and " p " is the propositional expression (Jesus' utterance) (cf. Searle 1969:31). Jesus' saying expressed within its propositional content is the illocutionary action, that is, they are performed

simultaneously (cf. Searle 1969:30). Therefore, this command reveals something about God $F(p)$, but it is not mere revelation p ; the point is to obey F , that is, the divine discourse $F(p)$.

Thus, a speech act in biblical language such as promise, warning, and exhortation cannot simply be assimilated with revelation. The intended function of biblical language of promising and commanding is not to inform us of what we do not know but to enable us to take on responsibilities and to require things of us. Hence, trust and obedience are the appropriate responses (Wolterstorff 1995:35). If divine discourse is revelation, it would only refer to the propositional dimension of the utterance of God, which cannot do something to the believers and cannot reveal the essence of divine discourse. According to Lanser (1981:73), “Propositional content, illocutionary content, and speech act context together determine the conventional perlocutionary effects of the verbal performance, the rhetorical impact the discourse will have.” Thiselton (1992:75) points out that, theologically, a hermeneutic of an embodied text reflects an incarnational Christology in which revelation operates through the interwovenness of word and deed not only through the words of Jesus. Therefore, divine discourse is part of God’s total speech act in Jesus Christ which does something to the believer in accordance with the illocutionary force. The illocutionary force also creates a perlocutionary effect resulting in appropriate responses from the believers such as trust or obedience.

The presence of the kingdom as divine discourse can be expressed through the language of promise between God and God’s people, which is in most

cases closely linked to eschatology. It entails how to live according to the Word of God in the present with future hope in order to attain God's kingdom and God's purpose. In other words, the eschatological covenant as a primary content of divine speech shows a tension between what should be and what will be in the description of the present which is not yet fulfilled in terms of the yet unseen goal but which also provides guidelines or norms for the Christian life. Divine discourse is not revelation (propositional expression) but rather a performative act, which urges the believer to do something for God's kingdom. In most cases, the expression of revelation has no transitive verb, as in the statement, God is creator or God is Lord.

However, divine discourse as language of promise uses a transitive verb, for example, in the statement, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 5:3). It means that divine discourse in the language of promise has a specific purpose and, it will be performed at the right time. To put it more precisely, divine discourse of the covenant represents eschatological blessings. The term "eschatology" is used to describe the end-time in order to arouse the feeling of the imminence of a crisis and the need to make an urgent decision to change one's life (Ricoeur 1981:165). According to Yoder (1971:53), to live eschatologically is to live in the light of a hope which, defying present frustration, defines a present position in terms of the yet unseen goal which gives it meaning. Thus, having a hope for the future in the language of promise implies living the everyday life in faith. That is to say, the divine discourse of covenant relates to the implications of Christian hope for moral human action.

In this viewpoint, the presence of the kingdom as divine discourse of the covenant can be performed in the believing community to create a new social reality through the illocutionary force and its perlocutionary effect. Unlike the simple propositional content of the message of the kingdom (locution level), the illocutionary force and its perlocutionary effect create the new world of God's kingdom and fulfil God's kingdom based on God's intention. If believers really encounter the illocutionary point (intent) in God's saying, they should perform perlocutionary responses in their lives naturally. That is to say, the ethical conception of the kingdom of God is itself "a rule-governed form of behaviour" in God's speech acts such as the value system of righteousness in the Christian community. Therefore, through divine discourse, Christians can understand how to act both in relation to God and *coram Deo* in relation to the world and to each other (Brümmer 1992:59).

4.5 Summary and Conclusion of Chapter

This chapter has investigated the interface between the SAT and the presence of the kingdom and its moral dimensions by showing how the application of SAT in biblical interpretation could serve as a guide for Christian ethical theory and its execution. In particular, we have considered the presence of the kingdom and its moral reflection, the ethical approach to the presence of the kingdom as messianic language, and the presence of the kingdom as divine discourse of the covenant and its moral effects from the perspective of SAT. This hermeneutic and ethical consideration represents the performance of Christian ethics as a righteous witness to the kingdom of God in the modern world. The application of SAT in biblical interpretation offers three essential points to each ethical direction in the presence of the kingdom.

Firstly, the presence of the kingdom in the light of SAT can be divided into three dimensions namely the kingdom in the past, the present, and the future, but it also entails its moral reflection. To put it more precisely, the presence of the kingdom can be characterized through the threefold character of the locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts of SAT as the kingdom of God in the past (locution level), the present (illocutionary level) and the future (perlocutionary level), and their theological and ethical implications for moral conduct in everyday life. The following outline summarizes the basic descriptions of the kingdom and its moral direction from the perspective of SAT on the three different levels:

- (1) *The kingdom of God in the past* demonstrates that God has spoken to God's people in a *locutionary act*; it functions as a propositional expression, that is, the information that is communicated between God and the believer for God's kingdom. The locutionary act of the kingdom only points to the propositional elements and the propositional meaning in what God said.

- (2) *The kingdom in the present* refers to the force of what we do as *illocutionary act* through the inherent linguistic force in accordance with God's purpose, which shows how a proposition is to be taken so that it creates meaning or meaningful action according to the Word of God. In other words, the intent of God in the language act concerned is communicated in the form of an intentional act as the kingdom in the present under the illocutionary act.

(3) *The kingdom in the future* expresses what happens as a result of speaking to the believer in a *perlocutionary act* such as being persuaded, frightened, or alarmed which is the result of the illocutionary force. Thus, the kingdom in the future reacts to the intended effect of what has been said on the believer or the response.

Secondly, the presence of the kingdom in the utterances of Jesus can be understood as messianic language which in the SAT counts as the illocutionary force for Jesus' saving work. This shows that the propositional content of the kingdom "*p*" becomes a reality "*F(p)*" in the present through the illocutionary force "*F*" according to the specific intent of God – the salvation which is expressed as messianic force. In this regard, the sayings of Jesus and his teachings should be seen as performing actions with divine messianic force to execute His messianic purpose for the believers in everyday life. Even though the utterance of Jesus is a past event, its illocutionary force or energy and its intentions are continuously being echoed to the believers in the present. That is to say, illocution is able to determine meaning, and to act in line with the utterance in Jesus' messianic purpose, it should be characterized in the form of a promise *Pr(P)*, warning *W(p)*, blessing *B(p)*, and so on (cf. Searle 1969:31). Therefore, these messianic intentions concretise the particular Christian identity or the norms of Christian life in accordance with the illocutionary force which is represented in practical ways as Christian communal convictions, confessions, or creeds.

Lastly, SAT enables us to understand the presence of the kingdom as a divine discourse of the covenant and its moral effects. Wolterstorff (1995:19) has applied SAT to explain divine discourse which is not God's revelation but God's speech act, and which also indicates the fact that "God speaks entails that God exists" (Wolterstorff 1995:95). The Word of God can be expressed

as divine covenant which is closely related to eschatology because it shows us how to live as Christians in the present with future hope in order to accomplish God's kingdom and God's purpose. Biblical language demonstrates a particular divine purpose such as promise, warning, and exhortation, all of which do something to the believer for the sake of God's kingdom in accordance with the illocutionary force. The illocutionary force also creates a perlocutionary effect on the believers as it produces appropriate responses such as trust or obedience. Therefore, the presence of the kingdom as a divine discourse of the covenant can be performed in the believing community to create a new social reality through the performed illocutionary force and its perlocutionary effect.

To sum up, the presence of the kingdom can be perceived as God's mighty divine discourse which does not refer to a propositional theme in the text or just the utterance of sounds but rather a part of God's total speech acts which is intended to do something to the Christian. It includes the meaning of what God said (locutionary act), the force of what God said (illocutionary act), and the response of saying something (perlocutionary act). To put it more precisely, God's utterance is the performance of speech acts which produce in the believers certain effects or response. This occurs even today as the voice of the living God, and not merely as a past event that is trapped in Scripture. Therefore, this mighty divine speech act based on the illocutionary force affects the believing community, thereby making room for the performance of the ethics of the kingdom and God's intended perlocutionary effect on Christians as trust or obedience in the modern world.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Chapter Introduction

This research began with the question of how Christian ethics can understand the concept of God's kingdom as well as its true meaning and application by reconsidering the religious language of the kingdom of God from the perspective of the Speech Act Theory. The perspective provides practical Christian ethical dimensions for the application of the performance of the illocutionary force to show that the kingdom has divine power in accordance with the Word of God to create a perlocutionary response in the believing community today. The research therefore has endeavoured to investigate an application of the kingdom of God in two ways. Firstly, it examined how SAT helps to bridge the gap between the message of the kingdom and its praxis (Christian ethics). Secondly, it paid attention to the role and effect of the illocutionary force in the Bible in helping us to understand the meaning and performance of the ethics of the kingdom based on the living voice of God in the light of SAT.

5.2 Summary of the Core Concepts and Argument of Thesis

Chapter 2 investigated features of the three biblical language forms relating to the kingdom of God namely promise, warning, and exhortation in the context of cognitive propositional language in order to determine the ethical

dimensions of the kingdom. In particular, each of the three language forms relating to the kingdom of God in Jesus' parables demonstrates that divine activity is an inherent language force that enables the Christian community to fulfil God's will in the present. The propositional language in the biblical text indicates not only fact or statement but at the same time meaning and a meaningful act. To put this point more precisely, a text refers to its propositional content as what is "said" in which the text itself entails a meaningful act – what the text is doing (performative action), and not merely what it means (the objective of the theme).

Language creates new realities; it can bring into being a new world of reality regarding what has been written or spoken. From this perspective, the words of Jesus about the kingdom constitute institutional facts which have divine force on the state of affairs only within the genuine Christian community under God's sovereign rule, and the words should govern patterns of behaviour in everyday life. The message of the kingdom proclaimed by Jesus is not about a private but communal form of life that is displayed socially as a portrait of the disciples' ideal relationship to God and to others. Therefore, the words of Jesus should be the pattern for Christian action, and his identity should govern the realistic content of the ethics of God's kingdom. That is to say, Christian moral knowledge and its testimony perform something in accordance with the kingdom of God proclaimed by Jesus, which means those sovereign intentional acts about God's kingdom do promise, warn, and exhort God's people who are called to be God's true disciples.

The performative dimension of biblical language as an inherent linguistic force leads to an engagement with Christian ethics as we reconsider the religious language of the kingdom of God between the cognitive-propositional model of religious language and the performative-ontological model of religious language in two areas. The first relates to the meaning of the ethics of the kingdom and the second to the performance of the ethics of the kingdom. The Christian has to consider the notion of the ethics of the kingdom as an informative proposition. In this sense, the meaning of the message of the kingdom in the words of the text is the *propositional content* by which the believing community produces Christian ethics as an *aspect of life or a moralistic theme*.

However, the Christian community shows that biblical language is performative, as it demonstrates not only what the words meant but also the process of accomplishing that meaning. This performative aspect of the religious biblical language is a meaningful and intentional divine action which is closely linked to eschatology as the language of promise, warning, and exhortation between God and God's people. It is important to make a decision to change one's life in a practical way while hoping for the coming of the kingdom of God. Thus, Christianity or Christian ethics has an impact on how we live and what we do in contemporary life as it helps us to change our hearts and behaviour in practical ways. Thus, the words of Jesus also constitute divine performative action under God's reign, and they carry the force that could change the inner construct of the human heart as well as the outer construct of human attitude to conform to God's will. This perspective on Jesus' sayings enables us to distinguish between the meaning and the force of what the message of the kingdom says. In this sense, the kingdom passages would imply that the insight from the illocutionary force has permeated Christian ethical theory and it should be used to rethink the notion of divine

intention in terms of the illocutionary act in order to follow God's will. Hence, this ethical perspective will benefit from the descriptive power of speech act theory regarding the link between the word of the kingdom and biblical ethics.

Chapter 3 explored the notion of speech act theory based on the works of Austin and Searle in linguistic philosophy which is about the use of language in ordinary life. The theory of linguistic philosophy provides crucial insight into the interpretation of the text, and helps one to grasp its inherent meaning and act in accordance with the utterance of the sentence in ordinary life. The authors identify five essential themes under SAT. The first is that speaking a language is the performance of an act. Second, this performative utterance can be divided into three aspects namely the locutionary (the performance of an act of saying something), the illocutionary (the performance of an act in saying something), and the perlocutionary act (what we bring about or achieve by saying something). Third, the illocutionary action is the force of what we do in saying something according to the illocutionary point (speaker's purpose) to promise, warn or exhort the hearer. Fourth, SAT operates on principles or constitutive rules and it is linked to various institutional facts. Fifth, SAT assumes that a proposition is always represented in the performance of an illocutionary act as $F(p)$ which indicates the direction of fit between words and the world as reality.

Based on these themes, Christian ethics can discover a new moral sensibility and specific practical directions by distinguishing between the meaning of what the Bible says (proposition) and the force of what the Bible says

(illocutionary act). Since Christian ethical theory depends on the message of the kingdom proclaimed by Jesus (Chilton 1987:19-31), to know exactly what Christian ethics means or aims to do, first, we should know what the kingdom of God means in the words of Jesus. This is a necessary interpretive operation at the illocutionary level of the text. According to SAT, only illocution is able to determine meaning and to act in line with utterances such as warning $W(p)$, promise $Pr(P)$, blessing $B(p)$, and so on (Searle 1969:31).

In order to rediscover the meaning of the righteous kingdom and its contemporary ethical application, SAT claims that the use of language is explained by certain constitutive rules that govern human behaviour (Searle 1971:40). The propositional content can be understood as having certain “constitutive rules,” which constitute and regulate activities, and often have the form, “X counts as Y in context C” (Searle 1969:35). Conventions are involved in these constitutive rules which relate to different non-linguistic criteria. Hence, to perform an illocutionary act is to engage in “a rule-governed form of behaviour” that presupposes the existence of certain human institutions (e.g. marriage or the rules of baseball) (Searle 1969:51; 1979:17). This viewpoint can go beyond the mere identification of already existing patterns of behaviour and create new identity and lifestyles as well as discover ways of improving the present human condition. Therefore, as Christians, we are reminded of the meaning of the righteous kingdom and its life of righteousness in contemporary life, and the approach points to what will be, what can be, and what ought to be.

In fact, the ethical conception of the kingdom of God is itself “a rule-governed form of behaviour,” for it contains certain “constitutive rules” such as the value system of righteousness in Christianity’s social context. This is closely linked to the confession of the community that causes a particular identity to tell us who we are in society as well as who God is as we identify God’s illocutionary force in human history. All ethical reflection occurs relative to a particular time and place; and the very nature and structure of ethics is determined by the particularities of a community’s history and convictions (Hauerwas 1983:1). Thus, Christian ethics should be a performative action based on the message of the kingdom in the utterance of Jesus. In order to respond to this, an interpretive operation is required, in which the illocutionary force is expressed as the perlocutionary response to do something in accordance with the author’s intent. The goal of the analysis is not to replicate or retell the stories of early Christian communities but to transform or perform them through the illocutionary force to cause them to fit the words and world in contemporary life. Therefore, Christian ethical theory should be interpreted in the context of the kingdom in which the illocutionary level finds its true meaning and helps one to act properly as a Christian in ordinary life in the light of the kingdom of God.

Chapter 4 investigated the interface between SAT and the kingdom as well as its moral dimensions by showing how the application of SAT in biblical interpretation could guide Christian ethical theory and its execution. In particular, we examined the presence of the kingdom in the words of Jesus and its moral reflection, the ethical approach to the kingdom as messianic language, and the kingdom of God as a divine discourse of the covenant and its moral effects from the perspective of SAT. This hermeneutical and ethical consideration influences the performance of Christian ethics as a righteous witness of the kingdom of God in the modern world. The application of SAT

in biblical interpretation offers three essential points to each ethical direction in the idea of the kingdom of God.

Firstly, the idea of the kingdom in the light of SAT can be divided into three dimensions namely the kingdom in the past, in the present, and in the future, but it also entails its moral reflection. Specifically, the presence of the kingdom can be characterized through SAT in line with the threefold character of the locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts as the kingdom of God in the past (locutionary level), the present (illocutionary level) and the future (perlocutionary level), and their theological and ethical implications for the performance of morality in everyday life. The following outline summarizes the basic descriptions of the kingdom and its moral direction from the perspective of SAT on three different levels:

(1) *The kingdom of God in the past* demonstrates that God spoke to God's people as a *locutionary act*; it functions as a propositional expression, the information to be communicated between God and the believer for God's kingdom. The locutionary act of the kingdom only points to propositional elements with propositional meaning in what God said.

(2) *The kingdom in the present* refers to the force of what we do as *illocutionary act* through the inherent linguistic force in accordance with God's purpose, which shows that proposition is supposed to create meaning or meaningful action according to the Word of God. Thus, God's purpose through the specific language act is communicated in the form of an intentional act as the kingdom in the present under the illocutionary act.

(3) *The kingdom in the future* expresses the effect on the believer of speech as a *perlocutionary act* such as persuasion, fright, or alarm which is the result of the illocutionary force. Thus, the kingdom in the future reacts to the intended effect of what has been said or of the response on the believer.

Secondly, the presence of the kingdom in the utterances of Jesus can be understood as messianic language which counts as illocutionary force in SAT for Jesus' saving work. This shows that the propositional content of the kingdom "*p*" becomes a reality "*F(p)*" in the present through the illocutionary force "*F*" according to the specific intent of God, that is, salvation which is expressed as messianic force. In this regard, the sayings of Jesus and his teachings should be seen as performing actions by which the divine messianic force executes His messianic purpose on the believers in everyday life. The utterance of Jesus' messianic purpose can be characterized in the form of a promise *Pr(P)*, warning *W(p)*, blessing *B(p)*, and so on (cf. Searle 1969:31). Therefore, these messianic intentions concretise the particular identity of Christians or the norms of Christian life in accordance with the illocutionary force which is represented as Christian communal convictions, confession, or creed in practical ways.

Thirdly, SAT enables us to understand the kingdom in Jesus' sayings as divine discourse of the covenant and its moral effects. Wolterstorff (1995:19) has applied SAT to explain divine discourse which is not God's revelation but God's speech act which also indicates that the fact that "God speaks entails that God exists" (Wolterstorff 1995:95). The Word of God can be seen in terms of divine covenant which is closely related to eschatology because it entails principles about how to live as Christians in the present with future hope in order to accomplish God's purpose for God's kingdom. In essence, biblical language demonstrates a particular divine purpose such as promise,

warning, and exhortation each of which does something to the believer that would fulfil God's kingdom in accordance with the illocutionary force. The illocutionary force also has a perlocutionary effect on the believer as it produces appropriate responses such as trust or obedience in the believer. Therefore, the presence of the kingdom in Jesus' sayings as divine discourse of the covenant can be performed in the believing community to create a new social reality through the performed illocutionary force and its perlocutionary effect.

5.3 General Conclusion

From the perspective of SAT, the Christian ethical approach to the kingdom in Jesus' sayings not only aims to reconstruct the meanings of the ethics of the kingdom in the form of a propositional moral theme, but also to reconstruct the Christian life as performative action in ordinary life, that is, in terms of God's kingdom and its witness. Christians do not merely assert certain facts about God's sovereignty or God's kingdom; they address God in the act of committing themselves to God's kingdom and applying their minds to its righteousness naturally.

Since Christian ethics is based on the message of the kingdom proclaimed by Jesus (Chilton 1987:19-31), the essence of interpretation in Christian ethics is therefore the ability to recognize the illocutionary act in the Bible. In SAT, only illocution is able to determine meaning and to act in line with the utterance of the sayings. It also creates through the perlocutionary action the appropriate response in the believers. This means that the content of the

kingdom in propositional expression only refers to character meaning in the text and the illocutionary force or energy and its intention are continuously being echoed as reality in our lives. The living Triune God is still speaking to us through Scripture – not in past stories but in the present in order to fulfil God’s will and God’s kingdom. This implies that Jesus’ preaching about the kingdom of God actually focuses on what we should do or how we should live as Christians. The Bible is not supposed to be interpreted only in an academic context, but is also to be performed by the people of God (Fowl & Jones 1991:29). Christian communities are called to institute policies that alter the settings in which the interpretation of Scripture takes place. Scripture not only shapes the political contexts of faithful interpretation, it also tells us who God is, and how we ought to live in relation to that God. Therefore, in this response, the presence of the kingdom in Jesus’ sayings as well as its genuine meaning and application can be related to Christian ethics through SAT.

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